



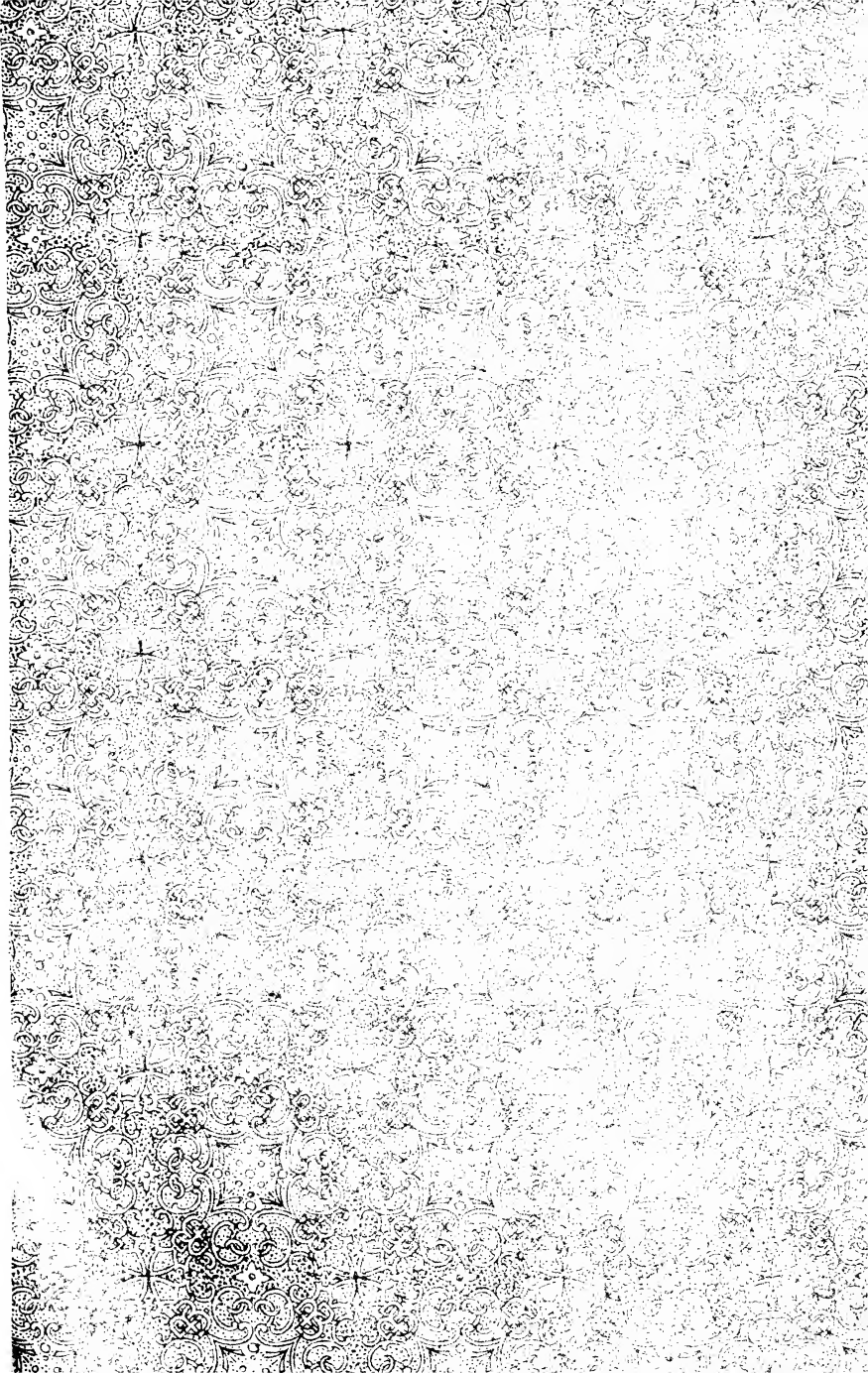
I WILL NOT LET THEE GO, EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME

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PRINCETON, N. J.

PRESENTED BY

The Widow of George Dugan, '96







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Charles T. Wright  
from.  
Mother.

Garrett died - May 26/98.



REV. E. WIGLE

PREVAILING PRAYER  
OR  
THE SECRET  
OF  
SOUL WINNING

---

BY REV. E. WIGLE

FIFTEENTH THOUSAND.

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THE CONTINENTAL PUBLISHING CO.,

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

1893

TO THE  
MEMORY  
OF  
MY SAINTED MOTHER  
FROM WHOSE EXPERIENCE AND EXAMPLE  
I LEARNED OF THE "UNSEARCHABLE RICHES  
OF CHRIST," AND THE AMAZING POWER OF  
PRAYER  
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED WITH GRATEFUL  
AND REVERENT AFFECTION.

*Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1891, by*

*REV. E. WIGLE.*

*In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.*

**T. B. ARNOLD**  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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*Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. They sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and God's goodness.*  
—Hugh Miller.

That these lectures were not designed to appear in collective form, or, indeed, to court the more public light at all, needs no disclosure. They are published out of regard to the wish of many friends, in whose hearing they were delivered; also, that they may, in some measure, in like manner help others who have not heard them.

They will be of unequal interest, according to the standpoint from which they are viewed, the state of the reader's heart at the time of reading them, or the degree of knowledge of the subject already possessed. Some are decidedly practical, others are somewhat expository, and still others slightly argumentative.

To the reader of this introduction no apology is offered for calling the attention of the reading public to a few thoughts on the subject of prayer. The *importance* of the subject demands that all possible help, bearing on this theme, be given to the people. The literature of the Church on this subject is yet meagre, in comparison with the interests centering in it.

Sir Isaac Newton, after his marvelous discoveries in science, said: "Still the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before me." How much *more* must the author confess that he has received but a glimmer of light on this wonderful subject, while illimitable floods sweep outward and upward toward a mysterious infinity.

These lectures are given to the public for the benefit of *learners*, and not for those who understand the subject *perfectly*.

What may be of no assistance to one may be just what another needs.

Though the *author* may not have said anything worthy of the attention of the reading public, yet the quotations made from many of the ablest and most devout thinkers of this and other ages, *deserve* to be carefully read and *re-read*.

Evidently a fuller statement of the subject ought to be made than has yet appeared; hence, for the sake of those whose minds are not as fully disciplined and stored as those of the more fortunate, many of the truths stated are more fully explained and illustrated than they otherwise would have been.

Having prepared these lectures while engaged in evangelistic work (the chief object in prayer being the salvation of sinners), necessarily the prayer of mediation — intercession for others — was chiefly in mind (intercessory prayer is the *great* work), and hence appears most prominently in the lectures, yet the *same* principles, in the main, underlie prayer for *any* purpose.

One reason for the great variety of thoughts presented, grows out of the fact that a multitude of questions were put to the author, by the people, who were always invited to ask questions, or request explanations, during the delivery of the lectures.

In the preparation of the lectures it has been constantly in mind to so state the thoughts presented that a child might understand them; also that a greater number of Christians might better understand the subject of prayer, as taught in the Word of God, and to furnish ample illustrations of its power, that believers might thus be led to have greater faith in *prayer* and greater faith in *God*; for in proportion as Christians understand this subject, the more certainly and easily will they offer the prayer of faith.

It is very apparent that it is not because the people



do *not want* to pray prevailingly that so few, comparatively, do so, but because of a *want of knowledge* of *how* to so pray. To set Christians to praying prevailingly is to get at the root of all success in Church work, and the secret of soul saving.

Some of the incidents and illustrations are familiar to ministers of the Gospel. They are inserted for the benefit of those not so widely read in this kind of literature.

Now and then a statement may be made that the reader cannot endorse. Let him not condemn it until he shall have read the book through, and find no explanation, or justification, of the view presented. There is more or less a systematic arrangement of the thoughts presented, so that a point that he may hope to see discussed in a certain lecture may be stated in some other, in a more appropriate relation.

What may not be fully understood in one lecture, may be explained more fully in another. For instance, the eighteenth may not be fully understood without reading the nineteenth and twentieth. The five lectures on faith should be read consecutively.

These lectures are given to the public in the same form, and much in the same order, that they were delivered in evangelistic services; hence, the reader should imagine himself as one of the audience to which they were addressed.

No attempt at a display of scholarship, a critical exegesis of the Scripture passages quoted, or a rigid methodical arrangement of the thoughts advanced, but a simple off-hand statement of what seemed to be truths that ought to be more fully and generally dwelt upon, and that stand vitally related to the greatest possible triumphs of the Church of God in this world.

Having spent twenty years in the pastorate, there is a profound sympathy entertained, by the author, for both pastors and Churches struggling to save men.

AUTHOR.

## PRAYER.

Lord, what a change within us one short hour  
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make !  
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take ;  
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower.

We kneel—and all around us seems to lower ;  
We rise—and all, the distant and the near,  
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear ;  
We kneel : how *weak* !—we rise : how full of *power* !

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others—that we are not always strong ?  
That we are ever overborne with care ;  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled, while with us in prayer,  
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee.

—*Trench.*

## LECTURE I.

*PREVAILING PRAYER THE GREAT WORK; OR, WE  
MUST CONQUER ON OUR KNEES.*

### PRAYER EMBODIES ALL.

Prevailing prayer implies and embodies all works, as the seed embodies the trunk, roots, branches, flowers and fruitage of the tree.

The history of piety is the history of prayer. All piety, and successful Christian work, begin, continue and end with prayer. From the offering of Abel's acceptable sacrifice down to the present moment, all blessings of grace have been bestowed, in answer to the triple intercession of the Son of God, the Holy Spirit and believing souls.

### THE ANGEL AND JACOB.

The angel said to Jacob (Gen. 32:28): "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Or, as a learned divine has translated this scripture, "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with men shalt thou also prevail." If, by the effort of prayer, we may prevail, both with God and with men, is there anything else in life that we can do which, in importance and power, is equal to prayer? On the day of Pentecost, the preacher and the whole Church being full of faith, the Holy Ghost, and power, in answer to the prayer of faith, one sermon resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls. To-day three thousand sermons, without this power in answer to prayer, would not save

one sinner. The more of churches and sermons we have, without prayer, that brings an endowment of power, the worse are we off. They are a savor of death unto death, and as someone has said: "If there were a religion to-day that had the doctrines and all the ordinances of the New Testament, and yet without the baptism of the Holy Ghost (in answer to prayer) it would not be Christianity."

#### INTERESTING SIGHT.

Because of the interests pending, and the power God has placed at the disposal of him who prays, the most interesting sight in this world is a man in the act of prayer. The angels of God look with wonder, and the Lord of angels bends from His lofty throne and exclaims: "Behold, he prayeth!"

#### PRAYER SUPERIOR.

While prevailing prayer is the condition of the efficacy of all other means of grace, it is itself the highest, simplest, most universal, most comprehensive and most effective of them all.

I shall not attempt a formal comparison of the importance of prevailing prayer and that of other means, to be used in saving sinners, but simply so speak of it, as that, I fancy, its superiority as a means of grace, will appear.

#### PRAYER MOST ESSENTIAL.

God has revealed the necessity of prayer and its almost unlimited power. "Ask, and it shall be given you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." Prayer is intimately associated with man's salvation, and without it we cannot be saved. How much, in Christian experience

and Christian labor, depends on prayer! Without prayer for the power of the Holy Ghost, to attend the truth preached, the Word will be a dead letter. "The *letter killeth*, but the *spirit giveth life*." I do not wonder that there are so many dead churches. "It is the *unction* that makes the preacher." How did Fletcher get this unction? By praying "without ceasing;" by pleading, wrestling, and prevailing at a throne of grace. All great soul-winners have conquered on their knees. Without prevailing prayer the social meetings become as cold as death, and the church will dwindle and become extinct.

#### PRAYER AND POWER.

There is no lack of machinery in the Church and Sunday school. What is wanting, in so many instances, is the power of the Holy Ghost, to energize this machinery. The Spirit of God is the Great Agent, who is the source of all vitality and power in the Church. His life and power are given in answer to the prayer of faith, and never otherwise. How did the early Church get this power? What could they have done without it? What did they do with it? What can we do without it—what with it? How are we to get it? A writer says of the sainted Bramwell: "I attribute the greater portion of his success in the ministry to his diligence in prayer."

#### PRAYER THE GREAT WORK.

As we advance we see in prayer the *great* means for obtaining strength and wisdom for our work in the Lord's service. As we understand this subject, we will see, more and more, that in-

tercessory prayer (mediation for others) is the *most* important, and the most real work, the Christian has to do. Prevailing prayer leads us into a holy and intimate nearness to God. It is the only way of approach to God—the only medium of communion with Him. Prevailing with God is the secret of prevailing with men, and *must* precede it. On what we transact with God, at a throne of grace, depends what we may accomplish with men. We may pray, and sing, and preach, until we drop into our graves, but until we prevail all will go for nothing. It is one thing to *pray*, and another thing to *prevail* in prayer.

#### PRAYER WINS.

Esau was conquered while Jacob was on his knees. The lions' mouths were closed while Daniel was on his knees. Elijah prayed, "and it rained not for the space of three years and six months." Again he prayed, "and it came to pass, in the meanwhile, that the heavens were black with clouds, and wind, and there was a great rain." When the idolatrous Israelites had made them a golden calf, and worshiped it, God determined to destroy them, and said to Moses: "I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people; now, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation." And Moses besought the Lord, his God, and said, "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against Thy people? \* \* Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people." "And the Lord repented of

the evil which He thought to do unto His people." But for the prayer of Moses, God would have annihilated the whole nation instead of cutting off but three thousand of the idolators! Strange as it may seem, yet the life of a nation depended on Moses' offering the prayer of faith!

"Oh, wondrous power of faithful prayer!  
What tongue can tell the almighty grace?  
God's hands are bound or open are,  
As Moses or Elijah prays!  
Let Moses in the spirit groan;  
And God cries out, 'Let me alone.'"

When Haman sought revenge on all the Jews in all the realms of Ahasuerus, because of the insult tendered him by Mordecai the Jew; and when it was decreed by the king that all the Jews should be put to death, Mordecai informed Queen Esther of the bloody plot; and the queen bade Mordecai: "Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me; and neither eat, nor drink, three days, night or day. I also, and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in, unto the king, which is not according unto the law; and, if I perish, I perish." When the Jews had thus, for three days and three nights, fasted and prayed, God answered and delivered them, and destroyed their enemy. I ask, what could have availed in this case but *fasting* and *prayer*? He who prays in faith enlists Almighty God, all the armies of heaven, and every law of the universe, in the interests of his cause.

LIFE AND SALVATION DEPEND ON PRAYER.

Strange as it may seem, nevertheless, the lives of the multitude of the Jews, scattered

throughout the vast realm of Ahasuerus, depended on fasting and prayer. Strange as it may seem, nevertheless, the eternal salvation of the lost of this community depends, almost infinitely more, upon the efforts of the Church at a throne of grace, than upon *all other* efforts combined; for it is in answer to prevailing prayer that power is given to endue the Church and move the lost Christ-ward. Peter was released from prison while the Church, at Jerusalem, were on their knees.

#### FAITH IS THE CONQUEROR.

Brethren, I have called your attention to these Scripture statements to illustrate the truth: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith is the victory! Not simply attempts to overcome the world, but actually and *triumphantly* "overcometh the world!!" "Overcometh the world" because the *power of faith is the omnipotence of God!*

#### POWER OF PRAYER ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

It was the power of the Holy Ghost given the Church in answer to the prayer of faith, that made the truth in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, effectual in the conviction and conversion of three thousand souls. Without this power in answer to prayer, the multitude would have remained unmoved, except, that probably they would have become so enraged that Peter would have lost his life. The prayer of faith brought a power that enchained the rabble and subdued the otherwise invincible. It was the power of God that came while Paul and Silas *prayed* and sang praises to God, that made the



earth to quake and sinners tremble, and that opened the prison doors and the doors of wicked hearts. The power that did these things centuries ago, can do the same to-day. This power is placed at our disposal, in answer to the prayer of faith.

The Syro-Phoenician woman, whose daughter was a demoniac, cried out of her maternal heart: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, \* \* Lord help me!" To which Christ responded (mark His *words!*); "*O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt!*" And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." The *all* important thing for that mother to do, was to *believe—prevail!!* So, my brethren, the *all* important thing for us to do, is to *believe—to have great faith in God; and this comes of great praying!*

#### FAITH THE VICTORIOUS GRACE.

"By *faith*, the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days," and Paul asked: "And what shall I say more? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barrach, and of Samson, and of Jephthae, and of David, also, and of Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness, were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

#### PRAYER MIGHTIER THAN THE MONARCH.

The death warrant of "bloody Mary" was signed in heaven, while John Knox was on his

knees, crying: "Give me Scotland or I die!" When that wicked ruler said: "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than I fear all the armies of Europe," she paid the finest tribute to the power of prayer, to be found on the page of ecclesiastical or profane history. The emperor of Germany resolved to proclaim religious toleration throughout his realm, while Luther and some of his helpers were on their knees; when Luther exclaimed: "Deliverance has come! Deliverance has come!"

#### FAITH AND WORKS.

Of course you understand me to imply in my remarks, that "faith without works is dead, being *alone*." Nay, there can be no true—*saving* faith without work. A true faith always implies all other needful effort on the part of him who prays.

#### OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CONDITIONED ON THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

Without the quickening and convicting operations of the Holy Ghost, the sinner will not—nay, *cannot* come to God. These operations of the Holy Ghost, are *conditioned on the faith of the Church!* As the Church prevails with God for the convicting power of the Holy Ghost upon sinners, the responsibility for the salvation of sinners, is transferred from the Church to sinners themselves. Only when Christians have done their reasonable utmost, is the responsibility entirely transferred to sinners. Then how great—nay *alarming* the responsibility of Christians! Then how important this subject of prayer!

## THE SINNER NOT RELIEVED.

This does not relieve the sinner of one iota of his responsibility, nor exclude the necessity of his prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." I speak of prevailing prayer, by the Church, as a condition of the salvation of the sinner, to be met *previously* to the sinner's meeting the condition of prevailing prayer for his own salvation.

## RECEIVE, THEN GIVE.

As priests, we must go into the holy of holies of God's presence by the way of prayer, and receive "all the fullness of God" *ourselves*, and an answer for the salvation of others, and then return to the people with a blessing for them. Christ spent all the night in the mountain in prayer, that the next day He might return "in the power of the Spirit," with great blessings for the people.

## PRAYER LEADS INTO WONDERFUL SECRETS.

There is nothing that leads higher into the secrets of God's life, deeper into the secrets of God's Word, or deeper into the secrets of our own hearts, than prevailing prayer. Nothing gives us such a view into the secrets of the amplitude and efficiency of the Gospel of the Son of God, or reveals the amazing possibilities of faith, as prevailing prayer.

## "THY KINGDOM COME."

The kingdom of heaven comes in answer to prayer. From childhood we have been praying: "Thy kingdom come." God sends laborers into His vineyard in answer to prayer. "Therefore, pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth more laborers into His vineyard."

Many years ago, one who is now preaching the Gospel, sent a letter to his mother, informing her that he trusted he at last had become a Christian. All through his college course he had waited; finally, while away from home teaching, he began to hope in Christ. So he wrote to his mother, and he said, moreover, he had through the whole of his life been moved with the conviction of conscience that his life was eventually to lead to the pulpit. He declared he could not explain how it came about, but it was true that he never had but one thought—that some time he should become a true Christian and then should study for the ministry. Across the Green Mountains, with one tremendous ride of sixty-six miles in one day, came that New England mother, and in a half-hour after she reached his side she told him in the shadows of the firelight that a score of years before, in the old village church, the devout women were fitting out a box for a missionary. She had put in one of his (her son's) small infant garments, with a slip requesting the prayers of that man of God to go with her prayers that this child might be a Christian, and, if God would honor her so much, might be a minister of the Gospel to dying men. That son is an elderly man now; but he soberly declares that he owes all he is to his mother's prayers, and he hopes to keep the faith till he sees her face once more.

#### POSSIBLE POWER.

How marvelous the power the Church may wield at a throne of grace, to move the "Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into

His vineyard," to replenish the wastes in the ranks of the laborers, occasioned by over-toil, infirmity and death. *The church most upon her knees will have the fewest vacant pulpits.* The gathering of the harvest depends on prayer. How solemn the thought! How almost overwhelming the sense of responsibility that thrills the soul of him who understands the power of prayer, and is in sympathy with a lost race in its paramount peril, and with him who "gave His life a ransom for all," as he lifts his eyes and sees the fields already white to the harvest. No subject equals, in importance, this subject! No toil buds and blossoms, and ripens into such a rich and abundant harvest!

#### THE GREAT LESSON.

The great lessons the Church needs to learn, are, the *place* and *power* of prayer in the kingdom of God, and *how* to pray—how to *prevail* in prayer, not only as a means of faith and holiness but as their outcome, as they lift us up and fit us for taking part with Christ in His intercession. "It is in intercession," said Andrew Murray, "that the Church is to find and wield her highest power. It is the root and strength of all church work." To attain the greatest possible measure of spiritual power with God in prayer, is the highest attainment possible in this life; and implies all other graces in a marked degree. Of all the traits of a Christ-like life, there are none higher—none so mighty for God's glory and man's good, as that which joins us to Christ, our great High Priest, in His great work before the Father's throne. He who reaches the core

of this subject, will find himself in the very center of the spiritual life, with vistas of untold blessing and power opening before him, because Christ himself is the center, life and power, of our prayer life.

#### WHAT FOLLOWED.

Dr. Lyman Beecher said of the great revival in Rochester, New York, conducted by Mr. Finney, that it was the greatest revival of the Christian era. During Mr. Finney's evangelistic ministry, hundreds of thousands were converted to God through his labors, joined to those of the Church. His "Lectures on Revivals" have been most wonderfully blessed in the conversion of sinners, directly and indirectly, not only in this country, but in foreign countries. When they were published in this country, 12,000 of them were sold as fast as they could be printed. They were reprinted in England and France. They were translated into Welsh, French and German. One publisher in London put out 80,000 volumes of them. Great revivals followed wherever they circulated. But why did such revivals follow Mr. Finney's preaching, and the reading of his lectures? I will let Mr. Finney answer this question himself. Said he in his autobiography: "Let the reader remember that long day of agony and prayer at sea, that God would do something to forward the work of revivals, and enable me, if He desired to do it, to take such a course as to help forward the work. I felt certain then, that my prayers would be answered, and I have regarded *all* that I have *since been able to accomplish*, as in a very important sense,

an *answer* to the prayers of *that* day. The spirit of prayer came upon me as a sovereign grace, bestowed upon me without the least merit, and in despite of all my sinfulness. He pressed my soul in prayer until I was enabled to prevail; and through infinite riches of grace in Christ Jesus, I have been *many years witnessing the wonderful results of that day of wrestling with God. In answer to that day's agony, He has continued to give me the spirit of prayer.*" Said Dr. N. Murray: "Prayer is the *power of the Church*, and could I speak as loud as the trumpet which is to wake the dead, I would thus call upon the Church, in all branches and in all lands, 'Awake! Awake! put on thy *strength*, O Zion. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem! Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, reformers, were *mighty in prayer.*"

#### EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER MUST PRECEDE.

"*Remarkable* outpourings of God's spirit have always been granted in answer to *extraordinary* prayer, and in *no other way*. The great revival in Ezra's time, when he and others preached from morning until midnight to a congregation of fifty thousand people before the water gate of Jerusalem, was preceded by that extraordinary prayer mentioned in the ninth chapter of Daniel, where he says: '*I set my face unto the Lord my God, to seek, by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes, etc.*' Before he had ceased, Gabriel flew swiftly and told him that God had granted his request at the begin-

ning of his supplication. By the same means that great revival was promoted, as we particularly learn from Ezra's own account of it. The great revival on the day of Pentecost was preceded by a prayer meeting by the whole Church, lasting ten days."—*Rev. Wm. S. Plumer, D. D., LL. D.*

Rev. John Livingston, of Scotland, said: "I never preached but *two* sermons that I would *care to see in writing*. The one was on the Monday after the communion at Spotts; and the other on the Monday after the communion at Holywood; and both these times I had spent the *whole* night before in *conference* and *prayer* with some Christians without any more than ordinary preparation."

#### PRAYER AND CHARACTER.

By prayer we receive of God's life and take on His character. We become like those with whom we have continuous and loving fellowship. "We shall be *like* Him, for we shall *see* Him as He is." We now behold Him in the gospel glass, face to face, and are "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "As He (Jesus) *prayed*, the fashion of His countenance was altered." So the fashion of our countenances and characters become changed as we draw near to God in prayer.

#### PRAYER LINKS US TO THE THRONE.

As we prevail with God in prayer, we supplement Christ's intercessional work. We are fellow-workers with Christ, not only in our *own* work towards *man*, but in *His* work towards *God*; for



we share with our great High Priest, not only in His *life*, but in His *work*. A correct view of prayer reveals the truth, that our lives and our life work are linked to the throne of God, and will crystallize as parts of the wonderfully glorious and abiding outcome of the present state and movement of things."

#### PRAYER AND THE "DEATH ANGEL."

There is power in prayer to hold at bay the Angel of death when God may be glorified thereby.

In February, 1861, a terrible gale raged along the coast of England. In one bay (Hartlepool) it wrecked eighty-one vessels. While the storm was at its height the *Rising Sun*, a stout brig, struck on Longrear Rock, a reef extending a mile from one side of the bay. She sank, leaving only her two top masts above the foaming waves.

The life-boats were away, rescuing wrecked crews. The only means of saving the men clinging to the swaying masts was the rocket apparatus. Before it could be adjusted one mast fell. Just as the rocket bearing the life-line went booming out of the mortar the other mast toppled over.

Sadly the rocket men began to draw in their line, when suddenly they felt that something was attached to it, and in a few minutes hauled on to the beach the apparently lifeless body of a sailor boy. Trained and tender hands worked, and in a short time he became conscious.

With amazement he gazed around on the crowd of kind and sympathizing friends. He

looked up into the weather-beaten face of the old fisherman near him, and asked:

‘Where am I?’

“Thou art safe, my lad.”

“Where’s the cap’n?”

“Drowned, my lad.”

“The mate, then?”

“He’s drowned, too.”

“The crew?”

“They are all lost, my lad; thou art the only one saved.”

The boy stood overwhelmed for a few moments; then he raised both his hands, and cried in a loud voice, “My mother’s been praying for me! my mother’s been praying for me!” and then he dropped on his knees on the wet sand, and hid his sobbing face in his hands. Hundreds heard that day this tribute to a mother’s love, and to God’s faithfulness in listening to a mother’s prayers.

#### THE LINK SURCHARGED.

There are plenty of sinners to be converted, and unless soon saved, must perish eternally. There is plenty of power to convert them. There is no channel through which this power reaches the lost, but the *Church*. Who among you were saved entirely independently of the Church? Who have you known who was so converted? Prevailing prayer is the link which connects the Church with this Holy Ghost power. The Church is the connecting link between the Holy Ghost and unsaved men; and unless the Church, the connecting link, becomes surcharged with Divine power, the unsaved must

perish. We are commanded to tarry until we "be endued with *power from on high*."

If we tarry and offer prevailing prayer, sinners will be saved. If we do not, as certainly as that we live, they will be damned! What are we going to do about this matter? The responsibility is upon us, and we must meet it *now* or in the judgment!

#### IS IT POSSIBLE?

Do you believe it possible for us to prevail with God for purity and power and the salvation of sinners? If we cannot prevail for purity, then let us never ask for purity again. If we cannot prevail for power, then let us never ask for power again. If we cannot prevail with God for the salvation of sinners, then let us *never* again ask God to save a sinner! Brethren, let us be consistent; *prevail* with God or *stop* asking. I repeat, do you believe it is possible for us to prevail with God for purity, power, and the salvation of sinners? In the light of God's truth; in the light of Church history, and in the light of your own experience, *you dare not say no!* The next question is, *When* may we prevail? If we ever prevail it will be in the *present* tense. This idea that we will prevail *sometime* never won a victory of faith. Never was a sinner saved till he narrowed his expectation of salvation down to the *present* moment! Never was a believer purified till he limited his faith as to *time* to the *present* moment! Never did a believer prevail with God for the salvation of sinners except he looked for the answer *now!* Every sentence of God's Book bearing on this subject says

"*now!*" Every drop of the atoning blood of Christ, shed to redeem sinners, cries *now!* The infinite worth and infinite interests of every lost soul, thunder *now!* We will never prevail until we *resolve* to prevail. Resolution is a very important factor in this matter of prayer—in the whole matter of salvation. Christians who prevail in prayer, do so because they *resolve* on victory at any cost. We will never prevail until we resolve to prevail *now!* The next question is *will* we prevail *now?*

"Frail art thou, O man, as a bubble on the breaker,  
Weak and governed by externals, like a poor bird caught in  
the storm ;

*Yet* thy momentary breath can still the raging waters,  
*Thy* hand may touch a *lever that may move the world.*

O, Merciful, we strike eternal covenant with Thee,  
For man may take for his ally, the *King who ruleth kings*;  
How strong, yet how most weak, in utter poverty, how rich!  
What *possible omnipotence*, to good, is dormant in a *man!*

*Prayer* is a *creature's* strength, his very *breath* and *being*;  
Prayer is the golden key that can open the wicket of Mercy.  
Prayer is the magic sound that saith to Fate, "so be it ;"  
Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscles of  
Omnipotence."

—M. F. TUPPER.

## LECTURE II.

*PREVAILING PRAYER, ITS NATURE, THEORIES AND  
DISTINCTIONS ; OR, PREVAILING PRAYER THE  
KEY TO THE GREATEST VICTORIES POSSIBLE  
TO THE CHURCH OF GOD IN THIS WORLD.*

### MEANING OF PRAYER.

In his little book on "Prayer," Rev. C. A. Van Anda, D. D., starts out in the opening chapter as follows: "The Hebrew word for prayer means appeal, intercession; that act by which our necessities, or those of others, are presented to God. The Greek term often used conveys the idea of a spiritual approach to God, together with that of pouring out the sentiments of the soul to him as an act of worship. Thus it is used in the passage: 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that *come* unto God by him.'"

### MYSTERIES AND REWARDS OF PRAYER.

In the way of him who would understand the subject of prayer more perfectly than the vast majority of Christians, there are difficulties that at times will embarrass him—sometimes greatly embarrass him, for this is a subject of unmeasured height, and depth, and breadth. Its relations and potency in the Divine administration no one can fully understand. Many millions of prayers are sincerely offered but never answered, and the perplexing question arises: Why? While prayer is set forth in the Word of God as a privilege,

yet multitudes feel it to be a burden; get discouraged and cease to pray. God says in His Word: "Ask and ye shall receive," yet multitudes sincerely ask, and they think in faith, and yet do not receive an answer till after the lapse of years, if ever; and this while the Word of God warrants expectation of an immediate answer. Others pray most earnestly and consciously exercise strong faith, and even, seemingly, have "the full assurance of faith" for the desired result, and yet fail to realize the answer. In such cases their faith receives such a stunning blow that it makes it seemingly all but impossible ever again to pray with any considerable degree of expectation. I might specify almost indefinitely, but this would be unprofitable.

#### ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAY.

While there are numerous mysteries to be solved and difficulties to be overcome by him who would thread the ever onward and upward pathway of prayer, far beyond where the feet of the vast majority have borne them to the sacred heights and rapturous visions of the mount of transfiguration, and so near to heaven itself as hardly to know whether in or out of it. yet such are the encouragements and helps to pray, and such its rewards that, comparatively, the difficulties dwindle to almost nothing. There are, to the school boy, numerous and great difficulties in mastering problems in arithmetic, but he can master them if he will. If he does, he grows intellectually; if he does not, development ceases. We are all pupils in the school of prayer, and

the Great Teacher has purposely, in infinite love and wisdom, so framed the problem in the text book of prayer, as to make it necessary to persevere against all difficulties and master the mysterious problems as they come.

#### KEEP AT IT.

All that is necessary to succeed, is to keep at it, and keep at it, and keep at it, praying "without ceasing," "praying always," and one difficulty after another will disappear, dissolved in sweetest blessing to the heart. A young minister, who was very desirous of becoming very successful in winning souls, asked Harrison, the evangelist, how he might become such a soul winner. Harrison replied: "Keep at it." So Jesus says to the praying soul: "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." O, what blessed heights are reached, and what ravishing visions burst upon the sight of the soul who perseveres and makes these difficulties stepping stones to victory after victory, "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of his faith."

#### THE END OF PRAYER IS OUR GOOD.

Prayer is not offered on the presumption that God is unacquainted with our wants, or that our supplications can occasion any change in His nature. On these principles it is obvious that prayer must have been instituted for our benefit.

#### WHAT IS PRAYER?

The question very properly arises: What is prayer? It is not an invention. It has its birth in the first sigh, the first tear, the first felt want of man. Prayer is the soul conversing with God. It is the appointed means of communion between God

and man, by which the creature tells his wants to the great Father, who alone can satisfy the longings of the soul. It is as natural for Christians to pray as for a child to go to its earthly parent and ask for bread. Prayer indeed is the "crying of an infant in the night." It is putting up our little hands into God's all powerful hand. It is the opening of our mouths, like the little birds in the nest, to receive their food. It is born of our need from the heart, the womb of the soul. Prayer is the most essential act of private devotion and public worship, in all ages and nations. It is rooted and grounded in man's moral and religious constitution, enjoined by God and commended by the highest examples. It is speaking to God, and offering to Him our petitions for mercies needed, and our thanks for mercies obtained. It embraces invocation, supplication, intercession and thanksgiving. It may be mental, vocal, private or public, in the closet, in the family, or in the house of God. We may pray for ourselves and others, for things needful to body or soul. All the saints of God were fervent and mighty in prayer. The objections to prayer proceed from atheistic and fatalistic theories. It is more natural for God, who is infinitely merciful, to answer the prayers of His children, than that earthly parents should grant the requests of their children. (Matt. 7:11.) Our prayers were foreseen by Him like all other free acts and included in His eternal plan. In spite of all objections men pray on.

GOD'S WILL AND PRAYER.

Prayer depends on God's will but does not



determine it. Man appeals, God complies. Man asks, God grants.

#### SUBJECTIVE VALUE OF PRAYER.

"Prayer has a subjective value necessary to individual piety, produces solemnity, enlightens and quickens the conscience, teaches dependence, gives true views of God, and produces such a change in us as renders it consistent for Him to change His course toward us."

#### THE WOUNDED SOLDIER'S PRAYERS.

"An army surgeon once illustrated prayer by narrating his experience on a battle field, after a terrible conflict. 'The ground,' he said, 'was covered with the dead and wounded. There was work enough for twenty surgeons to do. It was doleful to hear their cries. One cried out: 'Surgeon, I am bleeding to death! Won't you please bind up this artery?' Another, 'My limb is broken! Won't you take me to the hospital?' And still another: 'Surgeon, surgeon, I am in awful pain, can't you give me some anodyne?' And so, all over the field, each individual was asking according to his own personal need. They were praying: send the physician. Yes that is prayer when each person who feels the hurt and wounds inflicted by sin, comes to Christ, the Divine Physician, and asks of Him to heal his wounds. Such prayer has faith in it. Those soldiers expected the surgeon to help them. They knew that he was there for that purpose, and they asked in faith, nothing doubting. They threw themselves, wounded and bleeding, on the mercy and skill of the surgeon. Equally practical, is all true prayer. 'Lord help me, here is my guilt, etc.,

I lay it all upon Thee.' It charges Christ with all, and leaves everything to Him. It is the willing, waiting, eager attitude of a weak, struggling soul, in the presence of One who is able to save. When we thus feel our need, and thus venture our all on Christ, we learn by experience what prayer is, and sweetly know its answer too."—*Editor Michigan Christian Advocate.*

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above."

#### WHAT ACCEPTABLE PRAYER INCLUDES.

Acceptable prayer includes in it the offering up of the desires of the heart to God, agreeable to His will, and with a fervency of spirit proportioned to the blessing we ask for, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit's help, a constant reference to the finished work and intercession of Christ, and a faith that is the "substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."

#### DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PRAYER AND FAITH.

I think we should understand the difference between prayer and faith; for there certainly is a difference. Though intimately associated in true prayer, yet one is not the other. Is faith prayer? No. Is prayer faith? No. Then they are distinct, though not independent of each other. It is true that there may be petition without saving faith, but there can be no saving faith without prayer, for prayer is the exercise of saving faith. There can be no true prayer without belief—natural or universal faith. (See lecture "Prevailing Prayer the Prayer of Faith.") Some

measure of *belief* or natural faith must precede prayer. Yet prayer is the only way to saving faith. There can be no great development of faith, but by unceasing and importunate prayer. Prayer is knocking at the door; faith is the expectation that it will be opened. Knocking is the voice of expectation — of faith. Prayer is the breath that fans the flame of faith, and when the flame of faith reaches a white heat it completely burns away the dross of sin from the heart of the believer, and the bands of sin and Satan that bind the poor sinner, so that he has the power, and is free to choose life. Thus faith and prayer blend, they are reciprocal and interdependent. (Heb. 10:22.) "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting." Here prayer co-ordinates with faith. It stimulates the faith faculty. "Prayer is to faith what the air and lungs are to the blood in our physical system. The blood, pure and simple, is the life, but the lungs receive the air, decompose, transmute and appropriate it. In other words, the air and lungs make the blood. So with prayer, while it is not the condition of salvation, it contributes to make that which is the condition." Prayer arouses and puts faith to its work. To call on God implies confidence in God, and confidence in action by prayer, is transmuted into the human element, in saving faith. Faith is the seraph, prayer wings it to heaven.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER IS THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

Millions of prayers are offered, unaccompanied by faith. Listen to a thousand prayers (alas for

the seeming necessity for saying this); listen to the current prayers that multitudes of Christian people put up at the family altar, in prayer meeting and in the pulpit. Ponder these words, pointless, common-place circumlocutions, often prolonged: those wordy addresses and frigid formalities. Ah! Where is the faith? Such prayers are not only faithless, but purely human—nothing of the prayer of the Holy Ghost in them; hence they do not reach the ear of God. Prayer without faith is dead, being alone.

#### THE FORM OF PRAYER.

A writer, unknown to me, very appropriately remarks: “The *form* of prayer is of but little consequence. God looketh at the heart. Words are but the earthen vessel; the eye of heaven is upon the treasure. In the estimate of heaven the tongue of the eloquent and the lips of the stammering have a common value, and both are only regarded by God as they proceed from an honest heart. Fear not, then, at any time to come before God with feeble, faltering, broken utterances. If the heart go with them, your prayers have a music welcome as the songs of angels. Yea, and they will be more acceptable, the more minute and confiding, and full they be. For as God would hide from you nothing that is well for you to know, so you should hide from Him nothing you feel, or want. God waits only to be gracious. He tires neither of hearing our wants, nor heeds the form in which they are brought before Him. And whether, as an eminent saint has put it, the prayer be in the brief confession of the humble publican, or in the glowing

copiousness of the ripened saint, in the simple phrase of the unlettered laborer, or in the truthful lisplings of unpracticed infancy, the name by which He would be known to His children is, '*a God that heareth prayer*, and unto whom all flesh must come.'

#### POSTURE IN PRAYER.

The New York Tribune after quoting: "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker," very pertinently remarks: "In his notes on Eph. 3:14, that distinguished Biblical scholar of the Presbyterian Church, Albert Barnes, makes the following comment: 'The usual and the proper posture of prayer is to kneel. It is a posture which indicates reverence, and should, therefore, be assumed when we come before God. It has been an unhappy thing that the custom of kneeling in public worship has ever been departed from in the Christian Churches.' Kneeling has been the uniform practice of the Methodist Church since the days of Wesley; but sad to relate, there are some fastidious Methodists who cannot follow the godly example of their fathers, and in some places even Methodist preachers are becoming so wonderfully stiff in the knees that they stand 'bolt upright' (in Methodist pulpits!) and say, 'O Lord, we *bow* ourselves before Thy throne.'"

#### REASONS FOR PRAYER.

Why has God made the prayer of faith the condition of receiving certain favors from Him? On almost every page of God's Word we see that this is a fact: "Ask and ye shall receive." "Ye ask not and receive not," and the question

is, why ? (1.) Because, prayer is the most efficient means of bringing us to realize our dependence on the Almighty—the independent One. Without prayer we would not realize, as we ought, our dependence on God, but would foster the native sinful tendency, to wickedly ignore and forget the Giver of “every good and every perfect gift.” Prayer creates within us a sense of our absolute dependence on God.; not only for salvation from sin, but for material good, nay for our continuance in being—for “in Him we live and move and have our being.” A proper sense of dependence begets in us a proper humility before God, and proper emotions of gratitude and love to Him. (2.) Because, prayer is a means, and the only means of personal acquaintance with God. By other means we may know of God, but only by prayer can we know Him. It brings the soul face to face with God, as it hangs on His goodness for needed good. In prayer God draws the soul to Him, not only by its desires, but by all its sorrows, repentances, failures, and discords—in a word, everything that in its fall, it needs help. By what other conceivable method could God ever bring souls face to face with Himself, and with their backs turned on sin ? (3.) Because, the suppliant must abandon sin, or be defeated in his suit. His eye must be single if he will have the light. His motive must be pure, or he will find himself beaten off and his petition postponed. (4.) Because, prayer is a means of bringing man into harmony with God. In the light of God’s presence, he sees both God and himself, and the

points of discord between them. (5.) Because, prayer is the great means of assimilation to God and endowment with His character. Bushnell says : " It is that training God-ward, which holds us to a condition of faith in Him. So that we are covered in by the spread of His greatness, and new characterized by Him ; for really all great characters in all worlds, are but the over-spread of God's character ; much more in worlds like this, broken down as it is, by its disorder. We perceive how much it means that prayer is ordered of God, for the schooling of our faith in Him ; for only thus can we be drawn close enough to Him to be associated with Him in His perfections." (6.) Because, prayer is the most effectual means of self discovery, and purification. As we walk in the light, as God is in the light, in the pathway of prayer, sin will appear so odious, and the holiness of God so desirable, that we will be led, if sincere, to abandon the former and take on the latter. Thus prayer becomes " a fining pot." How any such refinement in God's chaste image could otherwise be hoped for I do not see. (7.) Because, prayer is one of the strongest bonds of attraction and unity compassing all godly souls in this world ; hence Christian fellowship, one of the greatest privileges and sweetest blessings possible in this life. As we have seen that prayer is the chief means of harmony with God, so is it of harmony and fellowship between men, for as we harmonize with God we harmonize with each other. (8.) Because. prayer constitutes one of the strongest bonds of attraction and unity compassing all

redeemed souls in the life to come. (9.) There is nothing like prevailing prayer to bring us to realize the awful peril of the lost, and lead us to put forth the most strenuous efforts to save them. It was while Bramwell was closeted with the King of kings that the awful guilt and peril of the wicked were uncovered to his gaze in the most remarkable manner. It was after days and nights of mighty wrestling with God, that John Smith buried his sobbing face in his hands, and exclaimed: "I'm a broken hearted man! I'm a broken hearted man!" He literally wept day and night. Why? Because, while in prayer he had received such a revelation of the condition of the perishing, as utterly overwhelmed him at times. (10.) Because, prayer is a means by which we become laborers together with God in running this world in the interests of the race. Prayer is the mightiest arm of power that man can wield in this world. God runs this world through sub-agents, good and bad. So far as they will allow Him, through good agencies—praying men and women. Hence the prominent part that prayer plays in the government of this world.

#### PREVAILING PRAYER AND GOD'S UNCHANGEABLE LAWS.

I am aware that to some minds, a serious difficulty connected with the subject of prayer, is presented in the question: If God and His laws are unchangeable, how can prayer influence Him to do, what otherwise would not be done? I answer, so far as we know, prayer enters into the original plan of the universe, as certainly as anything else, as a means to an end. So far as we know, it is one of the unalterable laws of



God, that on certain conditions, prayer shall be heard and answered; nay, so far as we know, it is, if not the mightiest, at least one of the mightiest factors in the Divine government, in reaching the most glorious outcome of the past and present movement of things, as that outcome relates to God's glory, and human destiny. As to our race, so far as we know, the chief work of the Son of God, as He appears in heaven, is to offer the prayer of mediation in our behalf. The Son asks, the Father hears, answers and bestows. The laws of God are but uniform modes of His own action, and these modes are so determined as that the loving heart of the Infinite Father, ever holds itself open and free to listen to every prayer that rises from human hearts, inspired by His own Spirit. Also these modes of action are so determined, as that God can allow Himself to be prevailed upon by prayer to do what He otherwise would not do.

#### WHAT IS PREVAILING PRAYER ?

Prevailing prayer is the prayer that infallibly secures the object asked for, and no other. "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them"—the *identical* things asked, and believed for. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you, that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, give him a serpent?" This subject should be looked at from, at least, three different points of view. (1.) If there is a specific promise, or any other evidence, that God is willing to bestow the favor asked, and if the required faith is exercised, the identical favor

promised is granted. (2.) But if there is no perceived evidence that God is willing to answer our prayer, we must pray with Christ: "If it be possible, \* \* \* nevertheless not my will but Thine be done." *i. e.*, "Father, if it is best to grant my petition, Thy will be done; but if it is best not to grant it, Thy will be done, not mine." In this case, whether the answer be yes or no, the prayer is answered, and the favor sought is granted. Every true prayer, that has no perceived evidence of God's will, says: "Father, if it be Thy will, (if best) to grant the favor asked, then bestow it; but if it be not Thy will to bestow the favor, then withhold it. I ask that Thy will be done, not mine. If my desire can be granted I shall be grateful, but if not, I shall be equally grateful." (3.) Still again suppose there is no known evidence of God's will, as to a favor asked in prayer; and further, suppose it to be contrary to God's will that the petition be granted, yet God may answer, not the *petition* but the *petitioner*. An illustration of this important distinction is found in Paul's case, when he prayed for the removal of the thorn. God did not grant his *petition*. He did not *remove* the thorn, but He answered *Paul*, when He said to him: "My grace is sufficient for you." It is erroneous and misleading to say that "God answers every true prayer, either by giving what is asked, or something better." It is true that God answers every correct prayer, but it is invariably, in granting the *identical* thing asked. If, as in Paul's case, God answers the petitioner, it is in a *denial* of his prayer, and, if God in mercy sees proper, in

addition to the *denial* of his prayer, to reveal to the suppliant what is better for him than an answer to his *petition*, it ought not to be construed as an answer to his *prayer*. More, Paul did not get God's sufficient grace, without asking in faith directly for that specific blessing.

DID CHRIST'S PRAYER IN THE GARDEN PREVAIL ?

This question, as to the prayer of Christ, is of *vast importance*, in determining the question: "What is prevailing prayer." That this question may be answered intelligently, let us ask, and answer the following questions: :What was Christ's request? What did He ask to be saved from? If these questions can be satisfactorily answered, I think there will be no difficulty in answering the question: "Did Christ's prayer in the garden prevail?" Rev. C. G. Finney, and others, maintain that "this cup;" that Christ prayed might pass from Him, was prospective death in the *garden*, from excessive sorrow; and that having been delivered from death in the garden, His prayer was answered. After a careful consideration of the scriptures, bearing on this subject, I cannot agree with this view of the case, but believe the cup against which Christ prayed, conditionally, was His soul agony—the hiding of the Father's face—the awful penalty of the insulted and broken law. So mercilessly and vehemently did the black tempest of soul agony lash His shuddering nature, and beat against His will—His ever holy purpose to do or suffer the will of His Father, that it seemed impossible to endure the fearful strain, and temporarily He wished that the cup might pass without His

drinking it, if it could be in keeping with the Father's will ; but if not, then He would drink it. Several days before Christ's agony and prayer in the garden, He was in a strait betwixt two. In John 12:22 He said: "My soul is troubled," at the prospect of what ? Death in the garden ? Most certainly not, but at the prospect of all that was involved in that comprehensive term : "This hour." Surely "This hour," did not mean death in the garden, for Christ Himself says : "For this cause, came I unto this hour." To die in the garden ? Most assuredly not ; for Christ knew that He was not to die in the garden. Then the terms : "This hour," of suffering, and, "This cup," and in Matt. 20:22, several days before His sufferings in the garden, He speaks of : "The cup that I shall drink of" (which cup is the same as that of which He speaks in the garden), have no reference to physical death in the garden. "And what shall I say?"—"I am in a strait. What shall I do?" "Already, He had fearful and troublesome apprehensions as to the appalling agonies of soul that awaited Him. He shrank from the stunning amazing and crushing agonies, that he knew awaited Him ; but to shrink from absolute subjection to the Father's will, would be worse still." In asking Himself : 'What shall I say?' He seemed as thinking aloud, feeling His way between two dread alternatives, looking both of them sternly in the face, measuring, weighing them, in order that the choice actually made, might be seen, and even by *Himself*, the more vividly felt to be a profound, deliberate, spontaneous action."

"Father save me (not from death in the garden but) from this hour." This is a real petition, like that in the garden: "Let this cup pass from me." What he recoils from, is not His Father's will, but the hiding of His Father's face.

#### IN THE GARDEN WITH CHRIST.

Now let us enter the garden with Christ and listen to His prayer, and behold Him in His agony. In Matt. 26:39 it is stated: "And He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed, saying: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Cup of death in the garden? No, for Christ knew that not only the prophets, but He Himself, had foretold His death, not in the garden but on the cross. Therefore He knew that He should not die in the garden, hence He did not pray against death in the garden. "He went away the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." So He prayed the third time. The surges rise higher and higher, and beat still more tempestuously and overwhelmingly. To fortify Him against the breaking down of His holy purpose to do, and suffer His Father's perfect will (for He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear but will with the temptation, make a way for our escape); "There appeared an angel unto Him, from heaven, strengthening Him." Not to let one ray of light into the inky blackness of the night of spiritual death that was upon Him in our stead. Not to minister one grain of comfort to His soul, quiver-

ing with anguish, and from whom all comfort had been withdrawn, by the hiding of the Father's face; for the law required that He suffer the full extreme of its demands. Had He suffered less, the atonement would have been a failure, or had He suffered more it would have been unjust. There could be no mitigation of His sufferings, but strength administered to endure them, to sustain and brace up sinking nature for a hotter and fiercer struggle, convulsing His whole inner man, and so affecting His body, that the blood oozing from the pores of His body, in great drops, fell to the ground. The third and last time we hear the agonizing cry: "Let this cup pass, yet not My will but Thine." "If it must be, Thy will be done," fall from His lips, and all is over—the bitterness of death is past. He has won the victory, "I will suffer," is the grand result of Gethsemane. "It is finished," is the triumphant shout from the cross. "O how narrow the path of danger Jesus trod to His and our redemption."

JESUS DID NOT EXPECT TO DIE IN THE GARDEN.

"Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt." Had it been physical death in the garden that Christ prayed against, it is impossible to conceive that He should have prayed thus regarding it, when He knew as no other could know, that it could not be His Father's will that He should die in the garden, because He knew that "holy men of old," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," had predicted His death on the cross. Not only the prophets had foretold this fact, and given the details, but He Him-

self had foretold it, and hence He could not be resigned to it, because He knew it was contrary to His Father's will that He should be.

"WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED."

But it is argued, from Heb. 5:7, that Christ's prayer was against physical death in the garden. The Scripture reads: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard in that he feared." It is triumphantly asked, "On what occasion was He saved from death if not on this?" I answer He was not saved from death at all, nor does this Scripture say that He was, but simply that His prayer was to Him, who was able to save Him from death, as in Mark 14:27, "\* \* \* all things are possible unto Thee" and in Matt. 26:53: "Thinkest thou, that I cannot pray to my Father (who was able to save Him from death), and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," to save me from death by your "wicked hands?"

HIDING OF THE FATHER'S FACE, THE DREGS OF  
"THE CUP."

He "was heard, in that He feared"—the hiding of the Father's countenance, which is the very core of the eternal death of the sinner. Hence, the hiding of the Father's face was the very dregs of the cup Christ had begun to drink. The cup He prayed to be freed from, was not corporal, but spiritual death: *i. e.* the (temporary) separation of His soul from the light of the Father's countenance. He was heard in His Father's strengthening Him, so as to hold fast

His unwavering faith under the trial. The Greek literally is "Was heard from His fear" *i. e.*, so as to be saved from His fear, or what better accords with the strict meaning of the Greek noun "In consequence of His reverential fear, *i. e.*, in that He shrank from the horrors of separation from the presence of the Father, yet was reverentially cautious, by no thought, or word of impatience, to give way to a shadow of distrust, or want of perfect filial love." (*J. F. and B.*) Now the question arises again: Did Christ's prayer in the garden prevail? Paul says, "He was heard," *i. e. answered*. Christ's prayer was answered, in that the Father granted the *identical* thing asked, *viz.*: that the cup might or might not pass, *as the Father willed*. Because of the seeming literally unendurable anguish of His soul, He most *earnestly desired*, that, if He might be *relieved* from drinking further of the cup, could this be, and yet the Father's will be done; but if the Father's will was, unexorably, that He should drink the cup to its dregs, then: "Thy will be done," is His prayer. This absolute resignation, under the circumstances of Christ's will to that of His Father's was the very *essence* of His atonement for sin. This was the culminating point in His redemptive work. Christ said: "I came not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me," hence His prayer ever was: "Father, what *Thou* wilt *I* will." This is true prayer.

PREVAILING PRAYER GETS WHAT IT ASKS.

Dr. Wisner made the following statement to Dr. Patton: "I took one of my elders with me



(where he was going to assist a brother in special meetings); that evening my elder led the devotions in family prayer, and poured out his soul in great fervency, for the conversion of sinners. He earnestly besought the Lord, that He would so trouble the impenitent, that they would feel constrained to awaken us in the night to enquire what they should do to be saved; \* \* \* about midnight the pastor came into our room and awoke us, to tell us that a number of sinners had collected at the Academy, who were so distressed with their lost condition, that they had sent a request for us to visit them. \* \* \* The next morning there were a number rejoicing in hope. \* \* \* It was the Lord who answered that prayer, by giving us the *very thing prayed for.*"

#### HOW MAY I OFFER PREVAILING PRAYER?

What an important question! How shall I answer it? How much may depend on the answer I give, God only knows. May be indirectly, the salvation or damnation of thousands of souls. "Lord help *me.*" How much may depend on how you hear and receive my answer. May be the salvation or damnation of thousands of souls. The Lord help *you*, my brethren. (1.) See, by searching your heart and life, and by a comparison of them with the requirements of God's Word, that you are in a state of heart, and so perfectly in accord with God, that you can claim God's promises as made to you, and put Him to their fulfillment. In other words, see that you are fully dedicated to God to do His will in everything, as He has revealed your

duty in His Word. If this condition is not met you need not inquire further. God will not hear your prayer. (2.) "Be filled with the Spirit." As He possesses you, He will illumine your mind, quicken your conscience, teach you what to pray for, and by His all powerful intercession within you, enable you to offer the prayer of faith. (3.) Maintain uninterrupted "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (4.) Obtain evidence from God's Word, His Spirit, or Providence, that He is willing to bestow the blessing desired. (5.) Having learned that God is willing (and He is, if your desire is legitimate) to answer favorably, cherish your desire until it is fanned to a flame. Become so profoundly, intensely, supremely interested in the object of your prayer, that everything else, at the time, must be entirely secondary, and if need be, laid aside — eating — sleeping — work — business, until God answers. How may I become so interested? Devoutly study the Word, to know your privilege and responsibility, and being "filled with the Spirit," who is infinitely solicitous that you should have an answer to your prayer, you will partake of His solicitude. (6.) Lovingly, but with all your will power, resolve that in the name of Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and with an eye to God's glory, you will have an answer to your prayer at any cost. (7.) Claim the answer at *once*. You may have the answer at once, if you will *now* meet the conditions; and now, other things being equal, easier than at any other time. The longer you pray for anything, except in a living, appropriating faith, the **harder**

it will be to prevail. Continue persistently, fervently, and if need be vehemently, till God answers, "yes, my trusting child." Thus take the Word of God—the great text book, and Christ as your Great Teacher; by the helpful ministry of the Holy Spirit, study the Word devoutly on this and kindred subjects, and on your knees, *practice* what you learn. While thus engaged, new lessons—new truths—new facts from the Word, and directly from the mind of the Spirit, who "shall lead you into all truth," will flash upon your mind. Thus study and practice, *study* and *practice*, every day, "in spirit and in truth," and little by little each day, you will be let into the wonderful and coveted secrets of access to, and power with God, in prayer. There is no "royal road" up to the higher altitudes of Christian attainment, where a single human soul may conquer heaven, earth and hell. Then be patient, but persistent. The great lessons of science and art have been learned by lifelong efforts, and shall we grow faint and give up if we fail after a brief and half-hearted effort, to wrest from the grip of the unknown, the most precious lessons that God Himself can teach His faithful child? While we may learn new and more precious lessons in prayer every day, yet it takes time; it takes a life time to study this subject, for Christian science finds in the subject of prayer some of its deepest problems—many of them insolvable. Nay, it will take eternity to fully understand this subject. Yet such are the joys of the eager learner, and the blessings attendant on the exercise of an ever increasing faith, that

the greatest encouragements are offered to *all*. In this race the victory is not to the rich, or great, but to the humblest child of God.

#### BEST TIME TO LEARN HOW.

By far the best time to learn how to pray, is in the *childhood* of Christian life, just as the best time to lay the foundation for an education and to begin to build thereon, is in childhood. Those who neglect their education till they reach middle life seldom become learned. So those Christians who fail during the first years of their Christian lives, to learn how to pray—how to prevail in prayer, seldom learn as easily as they might have done and become as progressive students in the school of prayer as they might have been, had they from the beginning of their Christian lives, been faithful in the study of the Word, and to the promptings and leadings of the Holy Spirit, who came into their hearts at conversion. Every young Christian should get into a *rut* as quickly as possible, and *stay* there as *long as he lives*. I mean the rut of “praying without ceasing.” His *great business* in this world is (1.) to learn *how* to pray most effectually, and (2.) then *practice* what he has learned.

#### DEFINITENESS IN PRAYER.

The prayer that prevails is strikingly specific. It narrows itself right down to one object, which presses itself on the attention, and on the heart, and fills the vision, and becomes for the time the supreme object to be sought, and obtained, if need be, by the *supreme act* of the life, of the petitioner. He who is cold and formal in his Christian life, spreads his prayer out, and around the whole world, it

may be, covering all subjects but the one most needed to be prayed for now, while the soul all alive, and on fire, and in holy, intimate and conscious fellowship with "the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," focuses all the energies of his being, for the *present*, on just *one* object of prayer, and holds on for that till he gets it.

#### THE WAYWARD BOY SAVED.

A boy is far away from home—a wicked youth, but mother is praying many hundred miles away. He tries to drown his convictions with drink, but somehow he cannot succeed. A strange power moves him. He stands before a Salvation Army barrack, hears the singing, passes by, returns, goes up stairs, purposes over and over to leave, but a peculiar influence is upon him, he surrenders and is saved.

#### POWER OF PRAYER.

Prayer may reach out its hand of power over sea and land, to the ends of the earth. The following facts will illustrate my statement: In 57 a father, said the leader of the noon-day prayer meeting in Kalamazoo, Mich., had three sons in distant and different parts of the country, all unconverted. The father requested prayers for their conversion. Soon three letters were received from these three sons, who had not communicated with each other, each giving an account of his own conversion. Another father requested prayer for a son at sea. The son was away on the Pacific. His case was made the subject of earnest prayer. He was converted in mid ocean just *about* the *time* the prayer was offered for him, away at that distance, where

none but God could reach him. He was convicted at once, and led to Christ, and the very first thing he had to tell his father on landing was what the Lord had done for his soul. He knew nothing of the prayer meetings; he did not know that he was the subject of special prayer.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL.

While the multitudes thronged about Christ there was a woman's finger tip, wasted to skin and bone by twelve years of deadly disease, thrust forward till it touched the hem of Christ's robe, and in an instant, from the battery of Christ's person, stored with healing virtue, came the life-restoring shock of saving power. So, my brother and sister, though countless myriads of voices pleading present need, throng His ear, yet your feeble voice, and mine, may find their way up through the babel of tongues and catch His waiting attention, and secure an immediate response from his loving heart and blessing hand. Your and my uplifted palms, amid the forest of beseeching hands, will receive into their clasping fingers, if in faith and patience they wait, not only *a* blessing but *the identical* blessing needed.

#### PRAYER.

Prayer goeth up as goes the mist,  
And swift is its ascent,  
Far, far beyond the heights sun-kissed  
Or cloudy battlement;  
It travels not on wings of air,  
Nor seen upon its flight,  
And faileth not till it shall dare  
Make entrance in the temple where  
It loving audience hath.

No message sent is lost, we know,  
Nor hath it disregard ;  
The answer may be swift or slow,  
It cometh with reward ;  
If slow, the waiting will be best,  
As long the mists remain  
Safe garnered in their azure rest,  
Till into cloudy folds compressed  
They fall in showers of rain.

Because the heavens are full of prayer  
The earth is full of hope,  
Thus through the void of our despair  
With promise we look up ;  
Presented in His name alone  
Who came for us to die,  
We leave our plea at His dear throne,  
Who loves his answer to make known  
As rain sent from on high.

—*Rev. Dwight Williams.*



## LECTURE III.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND ITS CONDITIONS; OR, "WHAT MUST I DO?"*

Several conditions of prevailing prayer are of such importance that I shall treat each one, of several, in as many lectures.

#### DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PRAYER AND ITS CONDITIONS.

It is important that we distinguish between prayer and its conditions. Usually, speakers and writers specify the conditions of prayer as elements of prayer itself. This is necessarily confusing. Prayer, though of necessity, always associated with its conditions, yet in its nature it is clearly distinct from them. Prayer is the act of presenting a request. Some of the conditions are *acts* of the petitioner; others are moral *states* of the petitioner's mind, and heart; others are *objects* had in view, in presenting the petition. For instance, confession is a condition of *act*, humility is a condition of *mind* and *heart*, while a proper motive is *objective*.

#### DEFECTIVE PRAYER.

Someone has very appropriately said: "Multitudes pray so defectively, as to strength of desire, importunity, faith, consecration, and other required conditions, that they do not come within the scope of the Scriptural promises." And one of the baleful results is, their own minds, and the minds of others, are filled with skepticism, as to the real power of prayer. This skepticism grieves the Holy Spirit, dishonors the name of Christ, reflects on the



love, faithfulness and benevolence of God, and results in spiritual paralysis of the Church.

#### FAITH IN PRAYER.

Greater faith in the power of prevailing prayer is an important condition of the greatest success in prayer, and this comes of a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of prayer and its wonderful possibilities. How few there are, comparatively, who really prevail with God in prayer; especially in intercessory prayer. This want of power, at a throne of grace, largely grows out of a want of knowledge, theoretical and experimental, by those who pray. Rev. Thos. K. Beecher said in a letter to Rev. Dr. Patton, in answer to his circular note of inquiry, asking for well-authenticated instances of answers to prayer, expressed his skepticism as to prevailing prayer, as follows: "In all soberness I want to suggest to you, whether the very tenor of your circular note to me, and the object you have in preparing your book on prayer, does not contain its own refutation. It appears that, although there are thousands close round about you, who are praying every day, yet the answers are so scarce, that you have need to cover a great area to get your evidence." Do we wonder that there are not more numerous and striking answers to prayer, while there is so much skepticism, in the pulpit, and in the pew, as to the power of prayer? What solemn mockery, for professed Christians, whose hearts are full of skepticism, as expressed in the above quotation, to open their lips in *pretended* prayer! Yet this Reverend Doctor voices the skepticism of multitudes, that consciously, or unconsciously, lurks in their hearts.

## OBEDIENCE.

There are certain actions and states of heart that make the exercise of faith impossible. Disobedience to God in any form, or in regard to any thing, which implies *impenitency of heart* makes faith impossible. A soul in the Church, or out of it, knowingly in rebellion against God in any measure, could as easily pluck the burning sun from the heavens as to exercise faith. Every disobedient soul is in rebellion against God. No one can believe without the help of the Holy Spirit, and He will not assist a rebel to believe, for that, to which a rebel has no claim. No one can believe when he will, except he always wills, "Not my will but thine" be done. A sinner in rebellion against God, and conscious of condemnation, must repent before he can believe—he must submit perfectly up to the light he has, humble himself under the mighty hand of God, confess his sins, unconditionally forsake them, and not till then will the Holy Spirit help him to believe for pardon. What is true of faith for pardon is true of faith for any promised good, conditioned on faith. Perfect obedience to God is the condition of faith for pardon, or purity, or power. Instead of saying: "*I can't believe*," let us tell the truth and say; "*I wont surrender*." To the fully surrendered soul it is as easy to believe as to breathe: nay, obeying is believing—the last act of a soul surrendering to God is believing. We are commanded to believe, and when we shall have obeyed the command, "Repent," we will be instantly helped to obey the command, "Believe."

When a soul has fully surrendered to God he is conscious of the fact, and until he is conscious of that fact, he should not attempt to believe.

"It is not possible to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is."—*Muller*.

#### PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

Thanksgiving should always precede petition. A proper recognition of past mercies is an important condition of receiving present blessings. Luther said: "Praise makes our prayers bold, and strong, and sweet; feeds and rekindles them as with coals of fire." "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with *thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God." A spirit of *ingratitude* is fatal to acceptable prayer. Subjectively, one great end of prayer is to beget and foster in the believer, the spirit of gratitude. Said Charnock: "The praise of God is the choicest sacrifice and worship, under a dispensation of redeeming grace." At a time of great despondency among the New England settlers, at one of their meetings it was proposed, that they appoint a day of fasting. An old farmer arose and said he thought it time to cease their ingratitude for mercies received, and appoint a day of *thanksgiving*. It was done, and has been continued to the present time. Whatever our trials or afflictions, we should, "in everything give thanks." There are many things for which we should always be grateful to the Giver of "every good and every perfect gift;" especially for His Gift of gifts to us, when He "so loved the world, that He gave His only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Even if nothing else called for thankfulness, it would always be an ample cause for it that Jesus Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us. A farmer was once found kneeling at a soldier's grave, near Nashville. Some one came to him and said: 'Why do you pay so much attention to this grave? Was your son buried here?' 'No,' he said. 'During the war my family were all sick, I knew not how to leave them. I was drafted. One of my neighbors came over and said: 'I will go for you; I have no family.' He went off. He was wounded at Chickamauga. He was carried to the hospital and there died. And, sir, I have come a great many miles, that I might write over his grave these words, '*He died for me.*'"—*Moody.*

When Solomon dedicated the temple to God, it was while the singers and all the people sang praises to God that the cloud descended, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. We should frequently turn to the psalms of praise and thanksgiving and revive in our hearts a spirit of gratefulness. "Let all the people praise Thee."

Speak, lips of mine!  
And tell abroad  
The praises of my God.  
Speak, stammering tongue!  
In gladdest tone,  
Make His high praises known.  
Speak, sea and earth!  
Heaven's utmost star,  
Speak from your realms afar!  
Take up the note,

And send it round  
Creation's farthest bound.  
Speak, heaven of heavens!  
Wherein our God  
Has made His bright abode.  
Speak, angels, speak!  
In songs proclaim  
His everlasting name.  
Speak, son of dust!  
Thy flesh He took,  
And heaven for thee forsook.  
Speak, child of death!  
Thy death He died,  
Bless thou the Crucified.

—*Dr. Bonar.*

#### REVERENCE.

Reverence for God, by the Christian, is a continual manifestation of a filial fear of Him, mingled with respect, and esteem. We must not forget that God dwells in unapproachable glory, far beyond the reach of our minds, and that we are but insects, in comparison with Him. "Holy and reverend is His Name!" How often irreverence characterizes the conduct, or language of persons during Divine service, in the house of worship. "Who has not seen the leader of song turn the leaves of his book, even with confusing sounds, during the moment of prayer? This is a most careless habit, and one most annoying, often, to him who engages in supplication. The fear seems to be that the next hymn will not be ready, and rather than that time should be lost, indifference and irreverence may be indulged. It is sadly evident, too, that ministers are most faulty in this direction. Their obligation is certainly a good example. We plead for reverence in time of prayer, and this

means closed eyes, bowed head and sealed hymn book. Such things are too often seen. They produce a very bad effect upon the young, and they are wholly unnecessary. He is a poor manager who cannot conduct a meeting without infracting the commonest rules of religious propriety. Dedications, funeral services, special occasions of all kinds, are greatly marred by what may be termed an exhibition of the machinery. The ordination of Bishops at the last General Conference was performed with less of this than any similar service within the memory of men now living. There should not be a single word or motion necessary to secure the orderly conduct of every special service. The Roman Catholics, the Greeks, with the most complex service in the world, and the Lutherans, do not find it necessary to make arrangements in public. Nor is there any need of it among Methodists, Presbyterians or Congregationalists. In the social meetings pre-arrangement cannot be carried very far, and would tend to formality if it were; but to examine hymn books during prayer is never necessary. The leader should have a sufficient knowledge of hymns to be able to announce them appropriate to the occasion at any such service; or if he cannot do that, he can always ask some one to start an appropriate hymn. If reverence be not maintained during divine worship, there is nothing left of any value.

#### ADORATION.

Though adoration and reverence are closely allied, yet there is a difference. Adoration is the act of paying homageful worship to the Supreme Being. How thoughtful should we be as we

approach the Infinite One, to ask of Him the petition of our hearts, remembering that we are "dust and ashes," and that God only is great. This adoration, Madam Guyon called the *prayer of silence*. "So much," she says, "was my soul absorbed in God, that my eyes and ears seemed to close of themselves to outward objects, and to leave the soul under the exclusive influence of the inward attraction."

## SINCERITY.

"God requireth truth in the inward parts," because He "is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." I most heartily endorse the following sentences :

"How odious is insincerity ! And yet how common ! Do not men often say things to God which they do not earnestly mean ? Say that they are miserable sinners, ask to be forgiven, and go on sinning ; say that they receive Jesus into their hearts, that they love Him, and yet show that they love the world and serve sin ? Now to have the true spirit of prayer, we must be guileless in heart towards God ; we must keep back no sin ; we must preserve a corner for no idol ; we must confess all, renounce self, and be willing that God should search our hearts and try our ways, and bring the most hidden things to light. The reason why God cannot hear us while there is any cherished evil in the heart, is that in such a state of the heart we cannot really pray. We may, as we have seen, recite words ; we may cry aloud ; we may fall low on

our knees; but we cannot pray. There is some anger resting upon our spirit, or some feeling of some mortified pride in our hearts; we are meditating a doubtful course of action, or allowing ourselves indulgences, which we know must grieve the Spirit; and so our hearts condemn us, a cloud veils the mercy-seat, the face of God is turned away, and the whole exercise degenerates in mere words. With the poet we must sigh:

‘One thing alone, dear Lord, I dread,  
To have a secret spot  
That separates my soul from Thee,  
And yet to know it not.’ ”

#### CONTRITION.

Contrition of spirit—a breaking and melting down of our hearts before God, in complete humility and yieldingness, is one of the most essential conditions of prevailing prayer. “Blessed are the *poor* in spirit,” who feels his comparative nothingness, and ill-desert. “Unto this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is *poor* and of a *contrite* spirit, and that *trembleth at My Word*.” For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also, that is of a *contrite* and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the *humble*, and to revive the heart of the *contrite* ones.”

#### CONFESSION.

*Unconfessed sin, is unforgiven sin.* David said: “I acknowledge my sin, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.” In so far as we fail to walk in the light, as God is in the light (for this is one



of the conditions of being saved from all sin), we are living in sin of some character and degree. Also so far as we are living in sin, we must confess our sin, that we may be saved from it. Before we quote: "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that He cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear," we ought to confess: "Our *iniquities* have *separated between us* and *our God*, and our *sins* have hid His face from us, that He will not hear, for our hands are defiled with blood, and our fingers with iniquity, our lips have spoken lies, our tongues have uttered perverseness." When we properly confess and forsake our sins, God's ear will hear and His hand will save. This is God's irreversible order. God's people may be holy, but when they become too holy to confess by praying: "Forgive our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," they are better than the Lord Jesus Christ expected anyone would ever become in this world. In fact, as we become more holy we will see with increasing clearness, the absolute holiness required by God's law, and how far short, at least, in our *ignorance*, if not in our intent, we come of measuring up to its demands. As we grow in grace, more and more we will see, as never before, the awful heinousness of the sins of the past, though "under the blood," and many acts of our past lives (that at the time we did not regard as sinful), will now appear to us more as God sees them, and, though at the time of their commission, we did not regard them as sins, being blinded by prejudice or ignorance, or both, and as we become filled with light and

behold the perfect law of God, by which is the knowledge of sin; and as we become filled, and enshrouded with light, we will see the stringency of God's law, as never before, and become, as never before, vividly conscious of its stringency, involuntarily—though there may be a perfect and loving trust in the Lord Jesus, at the time, as a present Saviour from all sin—the cry will well up from the soul, “Father, for Jesus' sake let the canceling blood of my Lord cover these sins.” As *God's* people confess and reform to the *bottom*, *sinners* will confess and reform to the *bottom* likewise. “O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy, to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments.”

No, not despairingly,  
Come I to thee;  
No, not distrustingly,  
Bend I the knee;  
Sin hath gone over me,  
Yet is this still my plea,  
Jesus hath died.

Ah, mine iniquity  
Crimson has been;  
Infinite, infinite,  
Sin upon sin;  
Sin of not loving Thee,  
Sin of not trusting Thee,  
Infinite sin.

Lord, I confess to Thee  
Sadly my sin;  
All I am, tell I thee,  
All I have been,  
Purge Thou my sin away,  
Wash thou my soul this day;  
Lord, make me clean.

—*Dr. N. Bonar.*

## RESTITUTION.

As the Holy Spirit of God flashes the light of Divine truth on the mind and conscience, we will see and feel, if we have wronged anyone out of what belonged to him, that we must make restitution, or we cannot be saved. "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him, to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering."

"The thief has not repented who keeps the money he stole. He may have conviction, but no repentance. If he had repentance, he would go and give back the money. If you have cheated any one, and do not restore what you have taken unjustly; or if you have injured any one, and do not set about to undo the wrong you have done, as far as in you lies, you have not truly repented."  
—*Finney*.

"I remember preaching in an eastern city, and a fine looking man came up to me at the close.

He was in great distress of mind. 'The fact is,' he said, 'I am a defaulter. I have taken money that belonged to my employers. How can I become a Christian, without restoring it?' 'Have you got the money?' He told me he had not got it all. He had taken about fifteen hundred dollars, and he still had about nine hundred. He said, 'Could I not take that money and go into business, and make enough to pay them back?' I told him that was a delusion of Satan; that he could not expect to prosper on stolen money; that he should restore all that he had, and go and ask his employers to have mercy on him, and forgive him. 'But they will put me in prison,' he said. 'Can you not give me any help?' 'No; you must restore the money before you expect to get any help from God.' 'It is pretty hard,' he said. 'Yes, it is hard, but the great mistake was in doing the wrong at first.' His burden became so heavy that it was, in fact, unbearable. He handed me the money—nine hundred and fifty dollars and some cents—and asked me to take it back to his employers. I told them the story, and said that he wanted mercy from them, not justice. The tears trickled down the cheeks of these two men, and they said, 'Forgive him! Yes, we will be glad to forgive him.' I went down stairs and brought him up. After he had confessed his guilt and been forgiven, we all fell down on our knees and had a blessed prayer meeting. God met us and blessed us there." —*Moody*.

## MOTIVE.

Primarily, "The most purely self-absorbed wish to escape from the most rudely pictured hell,

may be, and often is, the beginning of a true trust in Christ. The great desire to get rid of a painful disease by the infirm woman was the starting point of a moral transformation, which turned a life into a peaceful, thankful surrender of the cured self to the service and love of the Mighty Healer. To think of the disease, mainly, is inevitable, before the cure; but after the cure we should think most of the physician. Self-love may impel to his feet, but Christ's love should be the moving spring of life thereafter. Before we have received anything from him, our whole soul may be a longing to have our gnawing emptiness filled; but when we have received His own great gift, our whole soul should be a thank offering. The great reformation which Christ produces is, that he shifts the center, for us, from ourselves to Himself; and whilst He uses our sense of need and our fear of personal evil, as the means toward this, He desires that the faith, which has been answered by deliverance should thenceforward be a 'faith which worketh by love.' As long as we live \* \* \* we shall never get beyond the need of the exercise of the primary form of faith, for we shall ever be pressed by sore needs, and dependent for all help and blessedness on Him; but as we grow in experience of His tender might, we shall learn more and more that His gifts cannot be separated from Himself. We should prize them most for His sake, and love Him more than we do them. We are first *driven* to Him, and then *drawn* to Him. Faith may begin with the desire for the blessing more than the Blesser. But it ends with desiring

the Blessor more than all blessings. Self is utterly lost in love, and 'Christ is all, and in all.'

Its starting point may rightly be, 'Lord save me, I perish.' Its goal must be, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,'"—*Alexander McClaren*.

To his own soul, who brings the needs of others to God in prayer, is opened all the fullness of the treasury of heaven. The prayers of the Christian must not be centered in *self*, but in *others*. Give me purity and power, not for my own sake, above all, but that I may use these graces in saving others to God's glory. The Syro-Phoenician woman cried: "Lord, help me." Not for her sake, but for her child's sake. "Let not every man look on his *own* things, but every man look also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Jesus said: "I seek not mine own honor, I seek the honor of Him that sent Me." These words are the keynote of His life: "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee." "I have glorified Thee on the earth, glorify Me with Thyself." It is as we enter into sympathy with Jesus, by making the Lord's glory our chief object in prayer, that our prayer cannot fail. "Do all to the glory of God." This includes every act of life. Is it not true in the great majority of cases, in praying for a child, a friend or a revival that the desire for our joy is far greater than to glorify God? No wonder that so many prayers are unanswered. Here is one of the secrets. Such prayer is selfish and therefore cannot be answered. "How can ye believe,

which receive, honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only." Sacrificing self is glorifying God.

DESIRE.

Prevailing prayer is accompanied by desire, intense, in proportion to the greatness of the blessing sought. If you want to be converted, you must desire above everything else, above life, the accomplishment of God's will in your salvation. If you desire holiness you must desire it to the glory of God above worldly possessions; above the possession of your dearest friend; above your own pleasures in anything. Desire so intense as to swallow up yourself and all you have, so that you will be lost to everything in the universe but God's sweet will. Is this your desire, as you pray for the salvation of that friend, for holiness or power? Our souls have then the ability to leap forward and claim the promised good, even while in the act of asking. Such is the transporting, uplifting power of divinely wrought desire. *It is on the supposition that this mighty force is present, that our Saviour could say to any soul, "What things soever ye DESIRE when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*

Such desire may result from either or all of several causes, *viz.*, a clear view of the awful peril of perishing sinners, great sympathy for the lost, or it may be begotten in the heart, directly by the Holy Spirit, that the Christian, in getting rid of his burden of soul, may be brought so near to God as to be enabled to offer prevailing prayer. Very often without this great desire and

burden, the prayer of faith would not be offered; just as in the case of the sinner, unless God should let down on him the burden of his sin like a crushing mountain, he would never come to God for salvation. His burden drives him to God for relief; the condition of relief being surrender to God. When the Holy Spirit excites within us a great desire, we should at once surrender, and follow till we prevail in prayer. If we do not the Holy Spirit will be grieved. How many prayers are lost because great desire is not followed to where it leads—to victory! Now the question is, are we prepared to meet the condition of prevailing prayer? If we are not, then let us stop praying at once, knowing that prayer that does not meet the conditions specified, is an abomination to God, and therefore cannot be answered. With obedient, and broken, and trusting hearts and contrite spirits, let us come to our infinitely loving Father, whose bowels of mercy yearn over us, and who waits graciously to bestow, with unbounded pleasure, all that our needy souls require.



## LECTURE IV.

*PREVAILING PRAYER AND HUMILITY; OR, THE  
SERVANT OF ALL, IS GREATEST OF ALL.*

### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

This subject of humility, as a condition of prevailing prayer, is of such importance that I will devote a whole lecture to its treatment. A somewhat thoughtful reading of the Word of God, reveals most clearly the fact that humility is a condition of the prayer of faith; and must precede the bestowment of spiritual blessings; and that he who humbles himself, God exalts. "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him, also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. 57:15.) God says (2. Chron. 7:14): "If My people, which are called by My name, shall *humble* themselves and *pray*, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, *then* will I *hear* from heaven, and will forgive their *sins*, and will heal their land"—give them a gracious revival. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a *broken* heart, and saveth such as be of a *contrite* spirit." (Psa. 34:8.) One of the most offensive sins to God, and destructive of the human soul, is *pride*—self-exaltation—self-worship. True humility is a state of heart, in which we willingly and gladly own the truth, as to our

character and ill-deserts ; and to take the humblest attitude toward God and man. Not to bemean ourselves, but to look upon ourselves as God looks upon us, and take the attitude He would have us take, in sweet submission to all His righteous will. Other things being equal, he offers most acceptable prayer to God, who realizes most fully, the true contrast between the Supreme Being and himself, and who realizes his proper attitude before God, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, takes his place lowest at the foot of the cross.

#### GOD AND MAN IN COMPARISON.

Who is He, whom I address in prayer? the "High, and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place." In His holy presence and the blaze of His glory, the greatest of created beings, with his bright wing veils his face and trembles and retires! Who am I in comparison with him? Surely but a worm in the dust, having lived but a few moments, comparatively. How limited my capacities! How meagre my knowledge! How cold my affection! How great the multitude of my sins, of thought, word and act! But who is He? One letter of His name outweighs the globe. Job asks: "Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" "The farther my inquiring thoughts advance the farther dost Thou fly and nought I see, but my own ignorance and Thy immensity."

The winds obey His voice. He chains the angry waves to the shore. He yokes the

whirlwind to His car, and sweeps the howling sky. "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Doubt asks: "Where is He?" Her restless pinions beat the air and wander lost through all His vast domain. Faith triumphantly answers: "Whither shall I go *from* Thy Spirit or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend into heaven Thou art *there*. If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art *there*! If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there Thy hand shall lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

Nearly 3,000 years ago, the first inspired writer sang: "Who is like unto *Thee*, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Eighteen hundred years ago, the last inspired writer sang, as he caught the song from the lips of the angel choir: "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name, for Thou only art Holy!" Who can measure the fullness of his benevolence? "A million beats of man's united heart, are fainter than one throb of God's benevolence." A million loaded trees of life but poorly figure to our thought, the fullness of God's benevolence in Christ. A million worlds, each peopled with unnumbered millions, feeding on His bounty, could never drain or make that bounty less. As I stand in the presence of the Infinite One, what reasons have I for pride or self-worship? What reasons have I for *humility*?

## GOD FIRST, MAN SECOND.

It is of the utmost importance in prayer, not only that we cherish and feel a spirit of becoming reverence and adoration, but that we *thoughtfully* exalt God and humble ourselves, and that we seek His glory in the blessing that we ask. In commenting on our Lord's prayer, Andrew Murray puts it thus: "First *Thy* name; *Thy* kingdom; *Thy* will; then give *us*, forgive *us*, lead *us*, deliver *us*." Brethren, God *only* is great!

## GOD'S BLESSING FOLLOWS HUMILITY.

Humility must precede the reception of pardon, purity and power. Humility must precede a revival of religion, whether in the heart of the individual, or the collective body of Christians. God, of absolute certainty will not bless and revive a proud, formal, disobedient, and self-complacent professor or church. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, and He shall lift you up." "He that exalteth himself, shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Other things being equal, the deepest humility attracts the greatest measures of grace. "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*." He who feels that he is nothing, except as God makes something of him, has nothing, except as God gives him something; and because of his manifold sins, deserves nothing but eternal death, is the most greatly blessed man in the world; for *his* is "the kingdom of heaven."

## REASONS FOR HUMILITY.

Why should we be humble? (I.) Because, humility is enjoined. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." We should cultivate the

deepest sense of our indescribable unworthiness in the sight of God. If any good is done by us, it is all of grace, for: "Without Me," said the Master, "ye can do nothing." We are, and ever will be, "unprofitable servants." (2.) We should be humble, because of the humble origin and frailty of our bodies. "*Dust* thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is the Divine decree. All *pride* of personal beauty should be mortified by remembering the frailties of our bodies, and that all native personal attractiveness is a gift of infinite goodness, to be *appreciated* but not *worshipped*. When Abraham prevailed with God in prayer, he declared himself to be "but dust and ashes." Of course Abraham was an old foggy, and we, who are so greatly his superiors, will need to pity his weakness and exercise for him a great charity. (3.) We should be humble because of our exceedingly limited knowledge and consequent liability to err. While we recognize man as the crown of creation in this world, yet he is infinitely beneath God in his powers, knowledge and moral character. Luther said: "I fear the pope *self* more than I fear the pope of *Rome*!" (4.) We should be humble because of the moral corruption of the uncleansed heart. How humiliating the statement of God's word: "The heart is deceitful *above* ALL things, and DESPERATELY wicked." How humiliating the fact that there is no conceivable wickedness of which the human heart is not capable! No conceivable wickedness into which you or I may not fall! O, what an incentive to cling to God for help! Where it exists, the confession of this moral corruption

of the heart—*heartfelt* and definite confession—is an essential condition of acceptable prayer. Solomon said (Prov. 22:13): “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” My brethren, standing in the light of God’s word and of the coming judgment, have we been measuring up to the standard of Christian living and Christian character, as revealed in the holy Scriptures? To be indifferent to the claims of God upon us is a crime against God, against our own souls and against humanity. When God’s judgments were about to fall on Nineveh, and the alarming news came to the ears of the king, “he arose from his throne and he laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes, and he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste anything. Let them not feed nor drink water; but let every beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God.” God heard the cry of the humbled and repenting Ninevites and spared their city. Brethren, we too must go down on our faces before God before He will answer our prayer and bestow such a blessing as we need. (5.) We should be humble because of the many sins of our past lives—sins of the *heart* and *outer* life. What a multitude of sins appears in the lives of church members! Worldly-mindedness, pride, levity, lying (“any species of deception for a *selfish* reason is lying.”—*Finney*.), cheating, hypocrisy in prayer, and confessions to

God when we do not really *mean* all that we say, the indulgence of a bad temper, ingratitude, want of supreme love to God, neglect of the Bible, unbelief or want of faith, neglect of earnest, beseeching prayer, neglect of the public means of grace, the heartless manner in which duties have been performed, want of love and solicitude for souls, neglect of watchfulness over our own lives, and of self-denial. How often to escape reproach, or not to lose the good will of some offender against God and His truth, have we compromised with wrong, violated our consciences, grieved the Holy Spirit, and brought spiritual death upon ourselves and upon the church. There is no use for the minister or church to look for a revival until their hearts are broken down—until they are deeply and consciously humbled before God. (6.) We should be humble because of our absolute dependence—for our being and everything of worldly good or grace, that makes the continuance of our being possible or endurable. What have ye, that ye have not received? What had we when we came into this world? “Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” (7.) We should be humble because God blesses the humble and makes them efficient in saving others. (8.) Because, pride is one of the most offensive sins to God, and one of the greatest sins against Him, for it is worshipping *self* instead of God, and taking to self the glory that belongs to Him. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” Do you think that is the reason so many of us have

so little grace? May be it is. Let us look into this matter. (9.) The humblest is the greatest. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

#### ATTITUDE OF THE HUMBLE TOWARDS OTHERS.

What is the bearing of the humble, towards their fellows? The Apostle says: "In *lowliness* of mind, let each esteem other, *better* than themselves." In their *temper* towards others, they are "kindly affectioned, one to another with brotherly love in honor, preferring one another." In their *conduct* toward each other they are *subject* one to another.

#### EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY.

In the Scriptures we find many examples of humility. Paul writing the Philippians (2:4-9), says: "Look not every man on his *own* things, but every man also on the things of *others*. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of *no* reputation (Do you get the idea? Made Himself of *absolutely* NO reputation), and took upon Him the form of a *servant*, and was made in the *likeness* of *men*! And being found in fashion as a *man*, He *humbled* Himself and became obedient unto *death*, *even* the death of the CROSS. *Wherefore* (because He thus humbled Himself and made Himself of NO reputation) God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which is *above every* name. He humbled Himself *below all*, therefore



God exalted Him *above all*. O, my brethren, if Jesus, the Son of God—very and Eternal God, so humbled Himself, as to take our nature, and from choice, suffered his enemies to treat Him with the most cruel indignities, in the High Priest's palace, and in Pilate's judgment hall, and on the cross, that sinners—that *we* might be saved from sin and hell. O, how should we, because of our sins, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that we may receive all possible grace, and that sinners may be saved! In the beginning of Job's afflictions, he thought himself very righteous, but towards the close of them, when God talked with him a little, he exclaimed: "Behold I am *vile*, what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." Daniel confessed: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face." The publican would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, crying: "God be merciful unto me, a sinner!" There is no true prayer—no prevailing prayer, without humility. "It is the very perfume of prayer."

LORD UNCOVER TO ME MY HEART.

Let us pray as earnestly to see ourselves as God sees us—our desert of hell; the almost utter failure of our lives, because we have lived at so great a distance from our Lord; as earnestly I say, as for deliverance from sin. Nay, this is asking for deliverance from sin—the sin of pride—the sin of a want of a proper realization of our true state of heart, and a want of confession of it. The sight of our sins and failures

is not pleasant, but it will do us good to search them out, look at them, confess them, and ask forgiveness of God. The more holy we become the more we will see and feel our ill-desert, and utter unworthiness; and when in eternity, in the clear light of the heavenly world, we shall behold more and more the *real* contrast between our ill-desert and the infinite holiness of God, and His great love to us, we will adore and worship Him with an eternally increasing and profounder humility!

THE PROUD DEFENDS HIS SINS, BUT THE HUMBLE  
CONFESSES HIS.

The tendency is to turn away from our sins, to palliate them, and cover them up. The sinner does this. You tackle his sins and he defends them. They are *little* ones, and quite respectable, and often he is offended if you hold his attention right down to their heinous features. Faith increases as humility increases. When one is complete the other is. Jacob made confession of his utter unworthiness of the blessings that had been bestowed upon him. Said he: "I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies, and of all the truth Thou hast showed unto Thy servant." Literally: "I am too little to have received them. *Less than all.*" Had Jacob not humbled himself in the presence of the Angel, he could not have prevailed with Him.

WILL WE HUMBLE OURSELVES THAT GOD MAY BLESS  
AND MAKE US A BLESSING?

My brethren, do we every one, this moment, completely surrender to God, regarding everything that we know, and everything that we do not

know? *Do* we? Only as we humble ourselves will God hear our prayer. If by humbling ourselves we may prevail in prayer for the lost of this community, how great is our responsibility! While men and women have been going to perdition, right before our eyes, yet how little have we cared whether they should be eternally saved, or eternally damned! As we look at this matter, in the light of revelation, how little *real soul solicitude*, have we had, because of the awful peril of the lost in our midst!

PLEADING THE MERIT OF CHRIST—LET US VENTURE  
TO APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE.

Let us wrap our faces in the mantle of profoundest humility—of deepest and utter self-abasement, throwing ourselves on the infinite merit of our **Great Sin** offering—the **Great Sin** offering, which the Father Himself has offered for us—for our sins. Let us dare to venture into the holy of holies—into the very court of heaven, and into the awful presence of the Infinite One; yet the presence of a loving *Father*, and claim all in Christ as our right, in **HIS** right!

#### HUMILITY.

“ The mistakes of my life are many,  
The sins of my heart are more,  
And I scarce can see for weeping,  
But I'll knock at the open door.

I am lowest of those who love Him,  
I am weakest of those who pray;  
But I come, as He has bidden,  
And He will not bid me nay.

My mistakes His free grace will cover,  
My sins He will wash away,  
And the feet that shrink and falter,  
Shall walk through the gate of day.

—*Una Locke.*

## LECTURE V.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS ; OR, OBEDIENCE THE PATHWAY TO POWER IN PRAYER.*

#### SINCERITY A CONDITION OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER.

As we approach God in prayer, that we may reasonably expect an answer, we must be *perfectly* sincere — *in heart, perfectly true to God*. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in *truth*. Of him who presents his petition at the throne of grace, God requireth *truth* in the *inward* parts. To approach Him in prayer, while we dissemble in anything before *Him or man, or cover up any sin, in any measure*, is solemn mockery of God, and is adding sin to sin.

#### NO WONDER SO FEW PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED.

In the light of these facts, do we wonder that comparatively few — extremely few *availing* prayers go up to God? How becoming that we most earnestly join David in his prayer: “Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try and know my thoughts and see if there be any *wicked* way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Brethren, when church members become *perfectly* sincere, and become filled with an all masterful desire that God shall *search* them and *know their hearts*; to try and know their thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in them; God will turn this place upside

down and inside out, and right side up so quickly that it will make our heads swim! James says (5:16): "The effectual, fervent<sup>t</sup> prayer of a *righteous* man availeth *much*."

PREVAILING PRAYER RISES OUT OF THE FULLY SURRENDERED HEART ONLY.

It is only out of the *fully* surrendered *heart* — *fully* surrendered *will*, that the prayer of faith can rise. The prayer of faith is conditioned on *perfect* obedience up to the light we have. Brethren! "If we walk in the light, as He (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Are we *now* walking in the light of God as it shines from the sacred page in regard to every obligation God has placed upon us? How about a *prayerful study* of the Holy Scriptures? *Answerable* secret prayer? *Vocal* public prayer? *Family* prayer? Witnessing for Christ by *word of mouth*? Has the world the best of reasons for having absolute confidence in our Christian integrity, and entire devotion to God?

SIN IN THE HEART MAKES FAITH IMPOSSIBLE.

To *live* according to the will of God is the *only* way to know how to *pray* according to the will of God. There must be an abiding in Christ and an abiding of Christ's words in us, and it is only when these truths become *experiences* that we have the *right* to plead the promise: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." It is to Christians who have forsaken *all* for Christ's name, who count not their lives dear

unto them for His sake, and are ready to die, if need be, for His truth, to whom is granted the *full* power to prevail in prayer. "If any man *doeth* His will, *him* He heareth." "For God (John 9:31.) heareth not sinners." In 1 Peter 2:5, we read: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices (of prayer, etc.), acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The *prayer* depends on the *state* of the *heart*, and on the *life*. Christ taught us to pray: "Thy will be done in earth *as* it is done in *heaven*." A prayer offered in a spirit inconsistent with this prayer cannot be acceptable to God. As a man *is*, so will he pray. "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous." (Prov. 15:29.) A wicked man cannot have power with God in prayer. He who has power with God in prayer is a righteous man. He who has not power with God in prayer is *living in sin*. The person who does not *aim* at salvation from *all* sin, *means* to live in *some* sin. Paul says (1 Tim. 2:8): "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The early Christians in prayer turned their palms toward heaven, as those craving help do. God, by the mouth of Isaiah, says (Isa. 1:15): "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." Do you know why God has hid his face from the church in ——— and refused to hear prayer? Because they have lifted up *unholy* hands—hands full of

sin; unbelief; it may be rebellion of heart against God's *perfect* will, unkindly feeling, want of Christ-like love and charity, evil speaking, love of dress, love of money, cards, the dance, lust, sins of omission. Brethren, if we will hold up our hands we will see the blood of souls upon them! Some people seem to think that they can be Christians and pay but little or no attention to God's claims upon them; but the Word says (Prov. 28:9.): "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law (from heeding and obeying the law), even his prayer shall be abomination."

WHAT IS IT TO REGARD INIQUITY IN THE HEART?

By iniquity, we are to understand, sin of any kind or degree. There is no moral wrong in the heart or life that this word does not cover. By regarding iniquity in the heart, we are to understand, *cherishing* it in the mind; by a consent to its existence; or by a purpose to practice it. The marginal reading is more expressive: "If I have *seen* iniquity in my heart"—if I have known it was there, "the Lord will not hear me." We may regard iniquity in the heart by a simple want of effort to search it out, and expel it. Indifference is a sin. Not to search the heart and war against *all* sin in it, is to give it aid and comfort—to *cherish* it. We regard iniquity in our hearts by a deliberate purpose to neglect duty; for "he that *knoweth* to do good and doeth it *not*, to *him* it is *sin*." God will not hear us, when we pray for *ourselves*, or when we pray for *other* sinners. This Scripture explains why the Church, *collectively*, is so weak—so *powerless*. The

membership have not clean hearts. It also explains why such *abundant* means and efforts have been expended with such comparatively meagre results. These means and efforts have *not* been accompanied, *always*, by *such* prayers as God can *answer*. Will *we*, as individuals, bring our hearts to the standard of God's Word? If our *hearts* are right, our lives will be right.

#### THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN THE WAY.

*Feebleness* in prayer, in those who have made a profession sometime, implies *sin* in some form or degree. "The eyes of the Lord are over the *righteous*, and His ears are open to *their* prayers." "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him (why?) *because we keep His commandments*, and do *those* things that are *pleasing* in His sight." In view of the feebleness of our prayers, there ought to be the deepest and closest heart searchings. The *greatest* difficulty in the way of a revival is not the wickedness of the *ungodly*, but *sin* in the *hearts* of *church* members!

#### THE FIRST THING TO DO.

It will be seen that one of the first steps to be taken, as we come to God in prayer, is to "lift up *holy* hands;" to forsake *all* that we know to be wrong; to repent of evil thoughts and evil ways; to dedicate ourselves fully to God's service, and to accept His law as the rule of our lives. Brethren, if you are not measuring up to, or earnestly striving to measure up to the *Bible* standard of Christian living, you need not expect to offer the prayer of faith for the sinner. It is *impossible* for you to do it. *Holy* living and *power* to prevail in prayer, always go hand in hand.



If you give way to sin in any form, and do not renounce it, and prevail over it, you cannot prevail in prayer for yourselves or anyone else.

THE PATHWAY TO POWER IN PRAYER.

Obedience and righteousness are the pathway to victory in prayer. Said the Psalmist: "The Lord remembered me according to my *righteousness*; according to the *cleanness* of my hands hath He recompensed me. I was upright and kept myself from mine iniquity, *therefore* hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness." How many, *many* times have we prayed and received no answer. Asking amiss, or a want of obedience to God was the cause. A believer completely surrendered to God is *fully* conscious of the fact, and then, and then *only*, can he with a bold, unwavering and aggressive faith, joyfully *claim* the blessing sought. With the consciousness of complete submission comes the consciousness of a complete *right, in Christ's* right, to all that God has promised, and then, and then *only*, can faith in its matchless power rise to its supreme possibility. Hence it is of the *utmost* importance, *before* our petition is presented, that we *know* that our surrender to God is complete. John, in his first epistle (1. 3:21-22.), beautifully expresses this thought: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us *not, then* have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, *because* we *keep* His commandments and *do* those things that are *pleasing* in His sight." How our confidence loses its grip of God when we *fail* to "do those things that are pleasing in His sight!" A lady, a member of

the church, said to the minister after the service: "You told the truth to-day. My husband is an infidel, but he did respect Christianity a little, until one night I took a character in a drama played in our church. *That* night I lost my *grip* of my husband, and I am afraid I shall never get it again." The saddest fact was, *not* that she lost her grip of her *husband*, but that she lost her grip on *God*! Fathers have lost their grip on wayward sons! Mothers have lost their grip on unsaved daughters! Brethren, let us down on our knees in sackcloth and ashes before Him who drove the buyers and sellers out of His temple. Let us plead with God for mercy and *regain* our grip on His promise, and on His all powerful arm!

#### A PLEA FOR MERCY.

In the winter of '87, while assisting in a special service in an afternoon meeting, a church member began praying for sinners. He had uttered but a few sentences, when he began to pray for himself: "O, God, have mercy on *me*, a poor sinner, etc.!" In a few moments he was rejoicing in the consciousness of sins forgiven. If you indulge any appetite or passion, not with an eye to God's glory, you *commit sin*, and you need not expect to prevail with God in prayer. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves

in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.'

## INDIFFERENCE A SIN.

The sin of indifference is one of the most prevalent of all the sins in the Church. Indifference regarding our *own* experience. We read in God's Word: "Be *filled* with the Spirit;" and "Tarry until ye be endued with power from on high." Yet, how almost *utterly* indifferent most Christians are to these Divine commands! Indifference regarding the awful peril of the lost in the community, and in our own families! So far is the indifferent Christian from receiving a *blessing* from God's hand, that a *curse* is pronounced upon him; for God says: "*Woe* to them that are at *ease* in Zion." The sin of indifference is always in evidence of a *low* state of grace—of a *backslidden* state.

## MAY CHRISTIANS PLAY CARDS?

You never knew a card-playing professor who had power with God in prayer. As cards come *in*, power goes *out*. Said Hans Christian Anderson: "When the Evil One saw a Bible, for the first time, he wanted to put a bad book against it, and invented card playing."

"A few pieces of gay paste-board passed hither and thither in a group of young people seems an innocent amusement, and there are those who contend that poker and progressive euchre and seven-up, if played in a parlor, are not inconsistent with a Christian profession. Let all such read the strong, sarcastic words of the Rev. 'Sam' Jones on the subject, as reported in the Chautauqua Herald: I am often asked:

‘Do you think it any harm to play cards?’

‘Are you a Methodist?’

‘Yes.’

‘And you want to play cards?’

‘Yes.’

‘Go on, play day and night, because it is going to be too warm for that unless, you use some asbestos cards, for these ordinary linen cards won’t stand the fire down there. What do I mean by this sort of talk? Simply this: that wherever the love of sin, of any description, possesses the soul, there is no salvation for that soul in that condition. What do I mean? I mean this, that there is no theological book in Protestantism that describes salvation to be anything else than deliverance from the guilt and from the love and from the dominion of sin. Playing cards is the amusement of intellectual and spiritual starvelings. A woman in Chicago said to me:

‘What will I do with my husband. He is in active practice, and he comes home tired, and I sit down and play cards with him as a recreation?’

I said:

‘Take the little idiot to the asylum, and amuse him there.’

You can’t find a well-fitted asylum in any of the States of America that has not a deck of cards in every room. What for? To amuse the idiots. But all the idiots aren’t in the insane asylum by any means. God pity a woman bold enough to marry such a man, and call him ‘husband.’ God pity you if you have to grovel like that for recreation—you are getting down pretty

low. And playing progressive euchre. It is getting to be a fashionable game. Whenever you see a church in camp, they are death on cards. That is, they play cards all round. Did you ever see how soldiers are playing cards all the time? You couldn't go over a single battle-field but they were scattered all over it. When a fellow goes into a fight he throws his cards away. It is a fact. You men who fought in the last war, you know that every battle-field was covered with cards. And I will tell you another thing: Whenever God Almighty's Church moves out of church and goes off to battle, she will throw away her cards too.

I am often asked, do I think it is 'wrong?' Did you ever hear anybody ask, 'Do you think it is wrong to pray?' 'To pray in the family?' 'To read the Bible?' Did you ever hear anybody ask that question? No. Why? Because they know it ain't. But these people who are running around to know if there is any harm in this thing, they are headed that way themselves. I have never seen the day since God forgave my sins and took me up in His loving arms that I have had any more desire to go to the ball room or the card table than a desire to go to hell. That is as true as I am standing here.—  
*Inland Christian Advocate.*

The card table is an institution of God or the Devil. Which? No sincere person will contend for a moment that it is of God. By its fruits it is known. In 1890, 125 persons in the United States were shot or stabbed over gambling games. Twenty-five were stabbed and fifty-five

were shot over the gambling tables, or as a direct result thereof. Besides these, six attempted suicide, and sixty persons were murdered in cold blood, while two were driven insane. A large proportion of the gamblers in our land had their *first* lessons in *professedly* Christian homes. Can a righteous God give His *approval* of, and His blessing on, a practice whose fruits are such an abundant harvest of crime, bloodshed, suffering and death? He *must do one or the other*. Which? May a *Christian* approve and practice what *Christ cannot* approve? *Where* is there an *entirely consecrated Christian* who will *defend* the card table? Echo asks *where*? Dying sinners rarely, if ever, seek consolation from card playing church members. "Where is the home in which are *both* the card table and the family altar?" Again, echo asks *where*? *Shame* on a professed Christian who will zealously *defend* the card table, which has never, in a *single* instance, elevated its votaries one hair's breadth in the scale of morals—*made one heart purer, or one life holier!*

#### MAY CHRISTIANS DANCE?

You never knew a dancing church member who had *power* with God in prayer. The dance occasions the waste of precious time that might be profitably spent in self improvement, or otherwise usefully; a waste of money; a waste of health. It sends thousands to premature graves. Tippling is almost invariably an accompaniment of the dance. Public dancing and moral impurity are almost, if not quite, inseparably connected. *Passion* is the motive power behind this system

of moral corruption and death. In making this statement I am not beating the air, but striking at the heart of a huge, deadly monster, whose slimy folds encircle millions, and whose poisonous fangs are striking moral death into as many souls. Some of you think this is strong language. *Some* of you *know* that it is *true*. The dance "tantalizes an animal appetite as insatiable as hunger, and *more* cruel than *revenge*." I need not stop to prove the truthfulness of this statement. It studiously and with satanic ingenuity *plans* to bring the sexes into unwarrantable proximity. Just *here*, and no where else, lies the *secret* of the popularity of the dance, and *you know it!* I repeat, there is *deep* and *foul* design in bringing the sexes in such terribly perilous relations, "while *passional* electricity darts backward and forth, through intertwining fingers, flushing the face and kindling the eye to a flame, often grossly misinterpreted by the vile-hearted. New figures are stealthily introduced, from time to time, a little *more* doubtful than the old, in wanton whirls like the waltz and polka, often under protest from many who suffer their modesty to be overborne by the pressure of custom!" If the foregoing statements are *not* true, why does the dance, to be enjoyed *at all*, *require* the association of the sexes? The dance is a "leveler," and brings together socially the *otherwise* pure-minded and vile-hearted. Beautiful, innocent girlhood is browbeaten into polluting touch with the morally rotten debauchee! This fact makes possible, and real, the ghastly statement of a chief of police in the city of New York, *viz.:*

“To the dance is to be charged the downfall of nine-tenths of our prostitutes.” “But it is a means of *cultyah*.” A witty writer appropriately says: “Many a mother, whose daughter, nature has adorned with beauty, but scantily supplied with brains, sends her to the dance on *precisely* the same principles that the jockey, who has a horse to dispose of, puts him through those paces in which he will show off best.” A newspaper correspondent writes: “I have seen a negro boy of seven years, without the *first* elements of an education, dance with a grace and agility of motion that would put to blush the brightest star of the fashionable ball-room. The *most* accomplished dancers in the world are *untutored savages*, who practice in a state of nudity around their camp fires. What special incentive then, can a *cultured*, intellectual youth have to waste precious time in an amusement in which, after all, he may be surpassed by a rude Hottentot or even by *an ape*!” What accomplished dancer was ever yet persecuted for *righteousness* sake, or was even *suspected* of deep piety! In their *hearts* non-professors of religion do *not* respect church members who *dance*. They do not regard their conduct as in keeping with the value of the soul, the responsibility of this probationary life, and the solemn and changeless realities of the eternal world. The ungodly see a marked contrast between such *purely worldly* conduct and the *solemn vows* such church members have taken on themselves. Such professors of religion are never commended by the outside worldlings, *because* they enter into the amusements



of the dance, etc. In fact, they do not regard them as *Christians at all*, because their example is just what the *unsaved* refer to as an *excuse* when spoken to about becoming Christians. "There is your church member, a *saint* at the *altar* and a *patron* of the *world elsewhere*; a devout worshiper on the *Sabbath* and a leader of *vanity* through the week!" Shame! Must the frivolities of worldly pleasures needs supplement, in the *Christian* heart, the "peace that passeth *all* understanding; a joy *unutterable* and *full of glory*," and "the *unsearchable* riches" of Christ's illimitable grace to save, to satisfy every need and longing of the consecrated soul; to "*establish* the heart unblamable in holiness," and preserve the believer "blameless unto the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ?"

#### MAY CHRISTIANS PATRONIZE THE THEATRE ?

You never knew a theatre-going church member who had power with God in prayer. The editor of the Michigan Christian Advocate called attention to the article thus: "Taking up our copy of the (Detroit) Free Press, and glancing, among other things, at the amusement column, our attention was riveted upon the two following headlines: 'Young women, you were better to keep away from the stage,' and, 'What an outsider found in a theatrical boarding house.' Under these sub-headings followed a quotation from Mr. Clement Scott, of London, whose long acquaintance with the secret workings of the theatre, enables him to speak *authoritatively*. Being asked advice lately, in behalf of a young lady aspirant for the stage, and for his opinion whether

a woman could remain moral and respectable on the stage, Mr. Scott replied :

“ For heaven’s sake, pause ! There is always an opening on the stage for real talent, true genius ; but the talent and genius of stage aspirants must not be taken at their own estimate. There are many pure, moral and respectable women on the stage, but the atmosphere of the theatre is trying to the healthy moral constitution. A woman, not born and bred in the profession, must, in a certain sense, lose her self-respect and encounter familiarities, temptations and outlets for the display of natural vanity from which good women should be safeguarded. A woman may take a header into a whirlpool and be miraculously saved—but then, she may be drowned. If a girl knows how to take care of herself she can go anywhere ; but I should be sorry to expose modesty to the shock of that worst kind of temptation, a frivolous disregard of womanly purity. One out of a hundred may be safe, but then she must hear things that she had better not listen to, and witness things she had better not see. In every class of life women are exposed to danger and temptations, but far more in the theatre than elsewhere. All honor and praise to them when they brave them out.’

“ Mr. Scott is both right and charitable—right in admitting the nobility and exemplary lives of many stage players, and charitable in his comparatively mild protest against the moral infections with which the very air of the stage is laden. Not long ago this gossip was appealed to, by a much-disturbed young woman, for help

out of difficulty. Investigation disclosed the fact that she had got into a theatrical boarding house ; also, that the boarders were (professionally) held in high esteem, some of them being popular and prosperous stars, and the idols of thousands of high-headed women.

“What is the trouble in your boarding house ?” was asked of the much-disturbed young woman.

‘Oh,’ she replied, with a genuine shudder, ‘I really cannot, I dare not, tell one half the indignities I have suffered in that house for a week. But you would understand if you could, for a single day, take note of the offensive familiarities, the unbridled speech and the disregard of those little decencies that make up the charm of association between the sexes. You would have no need to ask what’s the matter.’

Everybody who has been much in the society of players, knows all about the unrestrained license of speech and manner, which marks their private communion. It is not necessarily criminal, but it is coarse, and it must be a punishment to delicate-minded women who come in contact with it for the first time. The distress of the much disturbed young woman was real, because there was large cause for it.”

The editor of the *Advocate* remarks more pithily than I can, in the following sentences :

“Here we have confessions that the very air of the stage is laden with moral infections. That the theatrical boarding house is full of unseemly and corrupting associations, offensive familiarities, unbridled speech, disregard of little sexual decencies, unrestrained license of speech and

manner in private communion—all these characterize the conversation and conduct of players. Enough! Let Christians blush, who, in the face of such testimony, by their own personal presence at the theatre, or by friendly concessions respecting that institution and its supporters, give countenance to the coarse, not to say criminal influences and practices of the modern play-actor."

One of the most astounding, and to the chaste, most *humiliating* evidences of the corrupting power of the stage is, that players can appear before a mixed audience almost the same as nude (nay, it is *because* the audiences *are mixed* that they *do* thus appear), and that "*respectable people*" can, not only have their sense of shame so blunted as to look on without a blush, but attend for the express purpose of witnessing "the scene." My gentleman hearer, must the stage resort to stripping its performers to increase its popularity? If so, "what need we further witness" of its *baseness* and of the *vileness* of the *society* who make the *demand*? My lady hearer, does the stage *license* a woman to *prostitute* and blast the proverbial modesty of her sex and yet be respectable? The stage is *authorized* to *shamelessly* do this *shameful* thing by the *demand* of the vitiated and vulgar—nay, *licentious* taste of *theatre-goers*!! What gentleman, not of "the profession," would be pleased to have his lady so appear, in company, in the *parlor*, or on the *street*? What young *gentleman* would prefer that his mother, or sister, should so attire, nay, *disrobe*, and appear in the parlor or on the street? Shame, shame, shame! Do you

wonder that so *few* prayers are answered; that so very few church members, comparatively, know very much of these wonderful subjects of prevailing prayer and unutterably blessed fellowship with God, in Christ, by the Holy Ghost?

## TOBACCO.

You never knew a tobacco-using church member, who had received the light of God's truth concerning questionable habits and practices, who had power with God in prayer. "For whatsoever is not of *faith* is *sin*."

## EVIL SPEAKING.

You never knew a back-biting, tale-bearing and evil-speaking professor who had power with God in prayer.

## FAMILY WORSHIP.

You never knew a person who was the head of a family and neglected family worship, circumstances permitting, who had power with God in prayer. Family worship, if not the most important, is one of the most important of Christian duties. The Holy Spirit of God will always reveal to the truly consecrated soul, sooner or later, his responsibility regarding this duty. God will never hear the prayers of parents, for the salvation of their children, who refuse to discharge this very important duty. The Holy Spirit often lays the responsibility of conducting family worship on Christian wives, whose husbands are unconverted, and I believe in every instance in which they are walking in the light, as God is in the light. Nay, not only is this duty laid upon Christian parents, but, when parents are ungodly, upon the Christian son or

daughter—the privilege being granted. If Christian wives, whose husbands are unsaved, would take up this cross in the strength of God there would not be so many unconverted husbands. A gentleman, speaking in an afternoon meeting of the power that a wife may have over her husband, stated that when his wife made a profession of religion, for a long time she was afraid to speak for Christ, or pray in his presence. “I went to the place of worship,” said he, “to hear what my wife would say, but not a word did she say, when I was there. She had a man-fearing spirit. I expected she would kneel in prayer, before going to bed, but she was afraid to do so in my presence. I felt sad and was sorry for her; but when she had grace and courage to pray vocally before me, I was so convicted that I yielded my heart to God. Had she done her *whole* duty at *first*, I would have been saved long before I was.”

#### UNKIND FEELING VS. POWER IN PRAYER.

If I indulge hatred toward any human being, “I regard iniquity in my heart,” for God says (Levit. 19:17, 18.), “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt not avenge, nor have any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord.” James says (5:9): “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the Judge standeth before the door.” Hear what John has to say on this subject (1 John 2:9-11.): “He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that hateth his brother

is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him; but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth because that darkness hath blinded his eyes (4:20, 21.). If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath *seen*, how can he love God whom he hath *not* seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." In Mark (11:25, 26,) the Great Teacher says: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses. Again in Mat. (6:14, 15,) Christ teaches: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive *not* men their trespasses, *neither* will your Father forgive your trespasses." In Col. (3:13) we have the injunction of the apostle: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." The following words are from the lips of the loving Saviour of sinners: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and

persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" John exhorts us: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. \* \* If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us because He hath given us of His Spirit. \* \* God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." Said Jesus: "This is My (eleventh) commandment, that ye love one another. Hereby shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John again boldly states: "He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we, that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." Still, it is proper to ask: "If an enemy maliciously injures me, does not repent, nor ask my forgiveness; am I to forgive him, and regard him in my feelings as though he were my *best friend*?" Most certainly not. God does not do that himself, hence cannot require that we do so. But as God *holds forgiveness in his heart*, ready to be bestowed when His enemy repents, and asks forgiveness, so he requires that we shall do. *No unkind feeling may be indulged.*



A QUESTION OF INTEREST, AND ITS INGENIOUS ANSWER.

A very interesting question was asked the editor of the Christian Advocate, which has an important bearing on the subject of this lecture, which, with the pertinent answer given, are as follows:

*Question.* "A brother had for twenty years been a Christian, as he firmly believed. He observed the means of grace. He relates several remarkable answers to his prayers occurring during that time that bear as good evidence of answers as those related by others. Those who knew him believed him to be a Christian man. But one day he was converted, and now emphatically affirms that he had never been a Christian prior to that time, but was deceived, and would have lost his soul. What relation did he sustain to Christ? Is it consistent with the Christian faith to believe that God will answer the prayers of other than a righteous man? Was he deceived, those answers being granted in favor of the faithful, fervent prayer of others?"

*Answer.* "This is a deep question. As helpful to its elucidation we submit five points: (1.) If there is no reason to believe that this brother was a hypocrite, he is probably deceived now as to his former religious experience, a thing far more common than many suppose. It is possible for a man to be a Christian, and subsequently become confused in his views, and think he was not, though not so common as for men to think they are Christians when they are not. (2.) If he had not clear evidences of conversion, but was conscientiously living up to the light he had during

those twenty years, he had the faith of a servant, as Mr. Wesley puts it, though not that of a son.

(3.) He may have been a Christian for a considerable period of time, and had a brief interval of backsliding before he came to his present light, and not recognizing his backsliding properly, he may have repudiated his past experience unjustly.

(4.) He may have received a very great blessing, so great that having nothing but the memory of his former experience to compare with it, his present state may seem so far above his recollection of that, that he thinks he never was converted.

(5.) God does answer the prayers of the wicked, reverently made in extreme circumstances, and connected with the promise of obeying Him. It is one of the means of leading them to Christ. Nevertheless, the supposed answers to prayers that men attest, running through a long period of wicked lives, are quite as likely to be coincidences as real answers; for the Scriptures distinctly state that a habit of deliberate wickedness is incompatible with any influence at the throne of grace. But as a man may think he is sick when he is well, or well when he is sick; may recover from an actual sickness and have a mistaken notion as to what really cured him; or may be made sick and not know what made him so, and attribute it to something harmless or even beneficial; in like manner positive statements about religious experience may or may not be in harmony with the facts. Perhaps if we knew this man we should have no confidence in any of his statements, and that without impeaching his general honesty; or we might believe he had been a better Christian

prior to the time that he says he was converted after the lapse of twenty years than he has been since; or we might agree fully with all his statements. Nothing can take the place of protracted experience of the individual case in judging human character and conduct, whether religiously or otherwise."

"PERFECT CLEANSING."

Who would be cleansed from every sin,  
Must to God's holy altar bring  
The *whole of life* — its joys, its tears,  
Its hopes, its loves, its powers, its years,  
The will, and every cherished thing!

Must make this sweeping sacrifice —  
Choose God and dare reproach and shame,  
And boldly stand in storm or flame  
For Him who paid redemption's price;  
Then trust (not struggle to believe),  
And trusting, wait nor doubt, but pray  
That in His own good time He'll say,  
"Thy faith hath saved thee; now receive."

*His* time is when the soul brings *all*.  
Is all upon His altar lain;  
When pride and self-conceit are slain,  
And crucified with Christ, we fall  
Helpless upon His Word, and lie;  
When, faithful to His Word, we feel  
The cleansing touch, the Spirit's seal,  
And know that He does sanctify.

*A. T. Allis.*

## LECTURE VI.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, AND THE NAME OF CHRIST; OR, "THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME."*

In John 16:23 Christ said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, *in My Name*, He will give it you." Again: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Paul, writing to the Philippians (4:19), says: "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory *by Christ Jesus*." God the Father is the great treasure-house of the universe—the great fountain-head of all good. Sin locked up this storehouse, and sealed this fountain. Christ took the sinner's place, satisfied the claims of the law, and became the sinner's surety, so that the obedient and trusting soul, has as free and full access to the treasure-house of the universe as though he never had sinned, *if he asks in the Name of Christ*. Paul, in Romans (5:2), writing of Christ, says: "By whom also we have *access*." Again, in Eph. (2:18,) Paul says: "For through Him we both have access unto the Father." Still again, in the same epistle (3:12): "In whom (Christ) we have *boldness* and *access*." How shall I gain admittance into the holy presence of the Father, that I may hold audience with Him, and present my petition? The Scriptures that I have quoted inform me that I cannot offer acceptable prayer to God the Father, but by Christ, and in *His* name. Then I must come and say: "Father, in the Name of Jesus I

present my prayer." If I have met all the other conditions of prevailing prayer, my prayer, if persistent, will be victorious; it cannot be thwarted.

THE MEANING OF, "IN MY NAME."

We will now inquire a little more critically as to what it is to ask in the Name of Christ. Andrew Murray says: "The Name of Christ is the symbol and expression of all He *is* and *does*. The privilege of using the Name of Christ in prayer implies the *right* of *His* privilege in prayer. It is the privilege of using *His authority* and *power* in prayer at all times, and for all that the promises embrace. It implies oneness of association and interests, and that we discard, utterly, all merit of our own names and natures, and rely solely on the merit of Christ's Name." Wheedon remarks: "To ask in the Name of Jesus, is to ask in complete identification with Him, as inspired by His Spirit, and as incorporated into His body. Such asking is in the interests of His Kingdom, and is identical with His will. Hence the absolute completeness of the promise, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name that will I do.' Such prayer is ever answered." Further, Dr. Patton says: "When the soul comes into perfect accord and sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ, its affections, desires and petitions fasten upon the same objects, and no other, which engage His own infinite approval and love. The intense longings, imparted by the Holy Spirit, are accompanied by the *Spirit's* discernment. Filled with the Spirit, the believer's desires are concentrated on the objects which are dear to the indwelling Spirit. Thus he asks in Christ's Name, and receives."

## THE PRIVILEGE OF CHRIST'S POWER OF ATTORNEY.

"Many years ago in the city of New York a merchant failed to a very large amount. After surrendering all his goods to his creditors, he found himself hopelessly bankrupt. No one would give him credit to the amount of a single dollar. He had a brother living in the city of Boston, who was everywhere known to be worth millions of dollars. This wealthy brother sent on to his bankrupt brother a power of attorney, no limits being designated, to transact business in *his* name. The poor bankrupt immediately hired a building in the business centre of the city, filled it with goods and commenced operations as one of the most prosperous merchants in the city of New York. In speaking to a friend upon the subject, he said: 'I will tell you how much I am worth in reality in this city. I am practically just as rich as my brother is. I can purchase anything and live just as well as he can. Yet if I should presume to ask anything in my *own* name, no man would credit me to the amount of a single dollar. I once in a while, for my own amusement, thus illustrate my position. I enter the store of an importer, and having selected a quantity of goods request him to send them to my store. 'But to *whom* shall I charge them?' he replies. 'To *myself*, of course, I respond.' 'I cannot do that,' is his prompt rejoinder. 'If your creditors should become aware that you had goods in that state in your store they would seize them at once and I should lose them forever.' 'I show him my power of attorney and remark, that I will purchase the

goods in my *brother's* name.' 'Take what you want, is the prompt reply.' 'In that dear name I could purchase anything the man had.' So, when and where Christ expressly and specifically authorizes us to ask in His Name, he puts us in full possession of a power of attorney by which we may obtain at a throne of grace all that *He* could, were He in our circumstances of need and should He in His own Name and behalf ask for the same identical blessings. God cannot deny Himself; nor can He deny His Son in His own Name and behalf. Equally is it impossible for the Eternal Father to withhold any good thing, of which the Son has said: 'Ask in My Name,' of the Father, that specific blessing. The Father can no more dishonor the Name of Christ, His only begotten Son, when and where He has expressly authorized the use of His Name, than He could cast dishonor upon Christ Himself, were He personally asking for the same blessing." However, there are express conditions on which Christ has authorized us to ask in His Name. We must renounce all sin and abide in Him and His words in us. We must ask in faith, nothing wavering (O, how much there is in those *last two* words, "nothing wavering!"), for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

#### APPRECIATING CHRIST'S MERIT WHEN IN PRAYER.

In prayer, we must hold in mind, *appreciatively*, that all things embraced in salvation are *by* Christ and for *His* sake. It is not only our

privilege, but we must present His sacrificial, atoning merit, as though it were our own, as the *ground* of our *right* of petition, acceptance, and salvation. O, what confidence and holy boldness this fact allows! To go to the Father in prayer, without *consciously* relying on the atoning merit of Christ's death, is to go to the bank in your great need without the check your benevolent friend gave you.

WHAT CHRIST'S NAME REPRESENTS.

The Name of Christ represents His glorious person; His intercession, and especially His sacrificial merit. In proportion as we fail to comprehend and appreciate the last sentence, our faith will be necessarily weak. In proportion as we appreciate Christ, and what He has done for us in His atoning death, we will be so affected by the greatness and tenderness of the Father's love, in the gift of His "only begotten Son," as to not only rely on Christ's atoning merit, but trust in the Father's love to forgive and save for Christ's sake. Cowper, as he looked only on his ill-desert, exclaimed: "I am too perverse to be otherwise than reprobated." But when he beheld Christ's atoning merit for *sinners*, he sang:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And *sinners* plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their *guilty* stains."

But how shall we be able to retain in thought, and heart, as we ought, the availing name of Christ? How gloriously marvelous the Divine method! "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come,



He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of *Himself*, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of *Mine*, and shall show it unto *you*. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." One of the offices of the indwelling "Spirit of truth" is to show us Christ, and intensify—vivify—our conviction that Christ died for *us*. As in the clear light of the "Spirit of truth" we behold Christ, "with open face," "the one altogether lovely," "even as by the Spirit of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." *How* this is, we cannot understand. The *fact* we *know*. The *how* of the fact is comparatively unimportant. It is sufficient to know that this inward revelation of Jesus, at the time of prayer, is carried on by an all-wise and infinitely loving Comforter. "O, how often Christ is 'transfigured' before the believer, while in prayer, when the face of the 'One altogether lovely' is made to 'shine, as the sun,' through the wonderful energy of the Holy Ghost!" Who can measure the fullness of Christ, when thus revealed! Christ in the moment of our prayer to the Father "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and all the hours of the day we may be kept in this conscious contact with Himself, by that Holy Spirit, who is of one substance, majesty and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

THE BARE UTTERANCE OF CHRIST'S NAME THE EPITOME  
OF PRAYER.

"The bare utterance of the Name of Jesus may be an expression of the most intense faith. The

deepest love often finds that all language fails, and that to breathe the beloved *name* is enough. All tenderness may be put into it, all rapture, all praise," all love. On the resurrection morn, Christ in one word opened His heart, and revealed His love, when He exclaimed: "Mary!" In return, Mary, with ecstatic joy, pronouncing, "Rabboni!" expressed the confession of her faith; the eager rush of her spirit to Him; the outpouring of her heart, and the ecstasy of her gladness. Thus, the mere utterance of the Name of Christ may be the epitome of all prayer—of all faith. It means all needed good asked, and all needed grace bestowed.

CHRIST'S NAME REPRESENTS ALL GOOD.

The Name of Christ stands for every needed good, both in this world and in the world to come. It stands for divinely revealed truth; atoning merit; the gift of the Spirit; pardon for the penitent; purity for the believer; power to prevail with God in prayer; power over the tempter; power over the world; power over the flesh; power to successfully work for God; power to "reign in life;" power to conquer in death; access to all the unsearchable riches of Christ in time, and all the glory and bliss of heaven in eternity! The golden coin stands for any earthly good. If you want bread, take the gold to the baker, and over his counter present it, as you ask for bread, and you will get it. If you want meat, present the gold over the counter of the market, and you will get what you want. If you want clothing, present the gold over the counter of the merchant, and you will get clothing. If you want any other needed good, present the gold and it is yours. So, the Name of

Christ stands for every needed good. If you want pardon, "Take the Name of Jesus with you, child of penitential sorrow, and present it at the throne of grace—the counter of heaven's treasure-house—and you will get it: for God says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord (in Christ's Name), and He will have mercy upon him," etc. If you want purity: Take the Name of Jesus with you, and present it at the throne of grace, and you will get purity. "For whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." If you want power, present the Name of Christ in faith, and "ye shall receive power, after that, the Holy Ghost is come upon you." With infinite pleasure, and unbounded benevolence, our Father in heaven delights to honor, in the largest bestowments, the "precious Name" of "His well-beloved Son."

" Precious Name! O how sweet!  
 Hope of earth, and joy of heaven!  
 At the Name of Jesus bowing:  
 Falling prostrate at His feet;  
 ' King of kings' in heaven we'll crown Him,  
 When our journey is complete."

With the Psalmist, let all the people say: "Amen!" "Blessed be his glorious Name forever."

THE WATER OF LIFE FLOWS THROUGH CHRIST.

Christ is the channel through whom the river of life flows. In His Name, we have a right to come to the Father, and ask for, and receive, all that He purchased for us by His death. Glory, honor, immortality and eternal life, are the dower of the Church, the Lamb's bride. The believer in Christ, with the telescope of faith, may sweep the whole

firmament of promises, and say, "These are all mine, because Christ is mine." In Christ, every blessing within the compass of infinite love, and power, to bestow, becomes *ours*. That is, we come into the right to possess them, and as we believe for them, we receive them. The Master's words are, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." As the branches receive, or may receive, all that the vine receives, if they *abide in* the vine, so if we *abide in* Christ, and His words *abide in us*, in *Christ's* right (mark), in Christ's right "all things" are ours; for *His* right becomes *our* right, because He takes us into *equal* heirship with Himself, to all His "unsearchable riches." Can anything be more glorious!!

ALL IS OURS IN CHRIST'S NAME.

The answer for any promised blessing is ours *now*, in Christ, if we abide in Him. It is already secured in answer to *His own* intercession, and is waiting to be bestowed. The moment faith is complete, for that answer, it will be instantaneously given. The *full* price must be paid. Then let us approach the Father in becoming humility, yet with *boldness*, conscious that we deserve eternal death, yet *equally* conscious of *our right in Christ* to all promised blessings, *because Christ died for us*.

CHRIST'S SIGNATURE HONORED.

Christ has won every attribute of the Godhead in the interests of the obedient and trusting soul; and the "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" the true Ahasuerus, seated on His royal, banqueting throne, reaches out the golden sceptre of His promise, asking: "What is thy peti-

tion, and it shall be granted thee, and what is thy request?" Christ has deposited in the bank of heaven unlimited treasure of pardon, love, peace, joy, etc., in the interests of a lost race. Every promise of God's Word is a draft on this bank, good for the face of it, *because* it has the signature of Christ with His own *all-atoning* blood. I speak it reverently and thoughtfully, *if* we "*abide*" in Christ, we have *just as good* a right and are just as welcome to come to the Father and ask for "all the fulness of God" as Christ Himself!

#### THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME.

O, the power of Christ's Name! The following beautiful incident illustrates the fact: William Reynolds, of Peoria, Ill., the earnest and successful Sunday School worker, tells the following story, which he heard from the lips of the missionary himself:

"The Rev. E. P. Scott, while laboring as a missionary in India, saw on the street one of the strangest looking heathen his eyes had ever lit upon. On inquiry, he found that he was a representative of one of the inland tribes that lived away in the mountain districts, and which came down once a year to trade. Upon further investigation he found that the Gospel had never been preached to them, and that it was very hazardous to venture among them, because of their murderous propensities. He was stirred with earnest desires to break unto them the bread of life. He went to his lodging place, fell on his knees, and pleaded for Divine direction. Arising from his knees he packed his valise, took his

violin, with which he was accustomed to sing, and his pilgrim staff, and started in the direction of the Macedonian cry.

As he bade his fellow missionaries farewell, they said, 'We shall never see you again. It is madness for you to go.' But he said, 'I must preach Jesus to them.'

For two days he traveled without scarcely meeting a human being, until at last he found himself in the mountains and suddenly surrounded by a crowd of savages. Every spear was instantly pointed at his heart. He expected that every moment would be his last. Not knowing of any other resource, he tried the power of singing the Name of Jesus to them. Drawing forth his violin, he began with closed eyes to sing and pray :

'All hail the power of Jesus' name !  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all.'

Being afraid to open his eyes, he sang on till the third verse, and while singing the stanza :

'Let every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all.'

He opened his eyes to see what they were going to do, when lo! the spears had dropped from their hands, and the big tears were falling from their eyes.

They afterward invited him to their homes. He spent two and a half years among them. His labors were so richly rewarded that when he was compelled to leave them because of

impaired health and return to this country, they followed him for thirty miles. 'O, missionary,' they said, 'come back to us again! There are tribes beyond that never heard the Gospel.' He could not resist their entreaties. After visiting America, he went back again, to continue his labors till he sank into the grave among them. No devil has so powerful a hold on a human soul but that the power of Christ's Name, in answer to prayer, can cast him out! How wonderful the privilege of using the power of Christ's Name in lifting the race God-ward!"

#### WHO HAS THE RIGHT?

Who has the right to plead the promises in Christ's Name? Only those who *obey* Him. Multitudes ask in the Name of Christ, who have no such warrant, because they are living in sin — the commission of actual sin, or the omission of duty. Asking *all* in the *Name* of Jesus implies *doing* all He *commands*, in *His Name*. The *full* power to use the Name of Jesus, depends upon constant abiding in Him. It is a *sin* to ask of the Father, in Christ's Name, if we fail to meet the conditions specified by Christ, on which He has authorized us to use His Name in prayer. It would be a violation of the law of the State, to go to the bank and ask for money in the name of another person, unless that person had *authorized* you to do so on certain conditions, while you failed to meet those conditions. Before you ask, *first* inquire: What are the conditions? and, second, Have I met them? "Nothing can use this unutterable Name, but meek, lowly, humble, holy faith."

## ONLY THE FULLY CONSECRATED.

It is for Christians only, whose wills are completely in accord with God's will, to whom is committed the full power of that Name. When *life*—yes, *life!*—for *all* is not on the altar, unless *life* is there: I say when *life*, and all else, are on the altar, the offering is complete; not till then. Are we ready to die for Christ's sake, if need be? *Are we?* If we *are*, then why are we not ready to do *anything else* for Christ's sake? Why do we hesitate when this, that or the other duty presents itself? When we give *ourselves* as fully to Christ as He gave *Himself* to, and for *us*, then we become not only *joint* heirs with Him, but *equal* heirs! In the future, when any duty presents itself, will we fail to meet our obligation, though the discharge of that duty takes us into the very jaws of death? O, it was this counting not even life dear unto them, that gave Paul, and Luther, and Wesley such power in prayer! Under their knees continents trembled! When ministers of the gospel are so given to Christ that they would rather die than compromise with sin; that they would rather die than "soften God's truth, or smooth their tongues, to soothe the unholy throng," the key to the treasure house of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" will be put into their hand. A Christian lady asked me: "Why is it that so few ministers have this power in prayer? They seem so weak in prayer, and the sermons of so many are so dry and spiritless! I go to church to get fed, and come away *hungry!* We get the *theory* and *form*, divested of the *life* and *power* of the gospel." When Christians, in the pews, are so given to



Christ that they would rather *die* than deny Christ, or grieve the Holy Spirit, the key to the treasure house of the universe will be put in their hand!

## TESTIMONY OF THE WORD.

Paul says: "Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us *therefore* (these things being true) come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." "In time of need!" O, what a time of need is upon us *this moment*, as a nation, as a Church, as individual Christians! Will we come boldly, in Christ's Name, and ask, and receive, all the grace we need?

"Jesus! — The Name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'Tis life and health and peace.

"All hail the power of Jesus' Name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of *all*.

"O, that with *yonder* sacred throng  
*We* at His feet may fall;  
We'll join the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all!"

## LECTURE VII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FAITH; OR, THE ALL INCLUSIVE CONDITION.*

#### RELATIONS OF PRAYER AND FAITH.

Prayer and faith are so intimately associated that in the minds of many Christians they are confounded, or, at least, used interchangeably. There may be the most fervent prayer unaccompanied by a particle of saving faith. The prayer of the rich man in *Hades* is an example; or the prayer of Paul for the removal of the thorn in the flesh. There may also be perfect faith unaccompanied by an uttered word of prayer. Prevailing prayer always implies faith. Prayer is *asking*; faith is *taking*. Prayer is the use of faith—is putting faith to account, to doing its work. An instance is seen in the beautiful and most touching narrative, given in Luke (7:37-48), of the deeply penitent sinner who, in silence, poured out, in her tears, her heart's most earnest and trusting prayer. Prayer is putting faith in action by the will—other conditions of faith having been met—just as I put the muscular power in my arm in motion, by my will. The prayer of faith is putting God to the fulfillment of His Word.

#### WHAT IS FAITH?

The question, What is faith? is a very comprehensive one, and is a question for the philosopher, as well as for the theologian. No subject in practical theology is so simple as faith; yet none

so deep, so high, so broad. It is so closely allied to other acts of the mind and heart, co-existent with it, and upon which faith is conditioned, that it is, in its depths, and ramifications, a deep mystery to most Christians. Paul writes of the "mystery of faith." Faith is a subject of special difficulty, (1.) Because, of the *nature* of the subject itself. (2.) Because, it has been given so many different meanings. (3.) Because, of the arbitrary definitions given of it. (4.) Because, of the greatly varied aspects, under which it is presented in the Word of God.

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY."

We are ignorant of *how* to believe, except as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word, and by the Holy Spirit, His representative. During Christ's earthly ministry, as He tarried all night, alone, in the mountain, in prayer, in the garden, and on the cross, He grasped and understood this many-sided subject, as no man before, or since has done; and our prayer should be: "Lord, teach us to pray" the prayer of faith. Though faith is a subject that is very great, and difficult to understand, in *all* its phases, relations and operations, yet the *act* itself is so simple that a child, or the unlettered, can as easily perform it, as the adult, or most learned.

CLEAR VIEWS OF FAITH IMPORTANT.

It is vitally important that we entertain clear ideas of the subject of faith, *because we follow where it leads*. It fashions our characters, and shapes our destinies. "As a man thinketh (believeth) in his *heart* so is he.

## UNIVERSALITY OF FAITH.

The Scriptures assign great prominence to faith. All the promised blessings of God, and all the conscious operations of the spiritual life, depend upon it. Faith is the basis of the family, of society, of commerce, and of government. "The farmer turns the soil and casts the seed, believing that seed time and harvest shall not cease. The merchant, in faith, deposits his money with the banker, and feels safer than if it were in his own hand. The goldsmith casts the precious metal into the devouring fire, believing he shall receive it back again, purer than when it left his hand. Turn where you will, to Christian or infidel, and you will see faith in man and natural law in operation. Look at the faith of the master mariner. I have often wondered at it. He looses his cable and steams away from land. For days, weeks, or even months, he never sees sail or shore, yet, on he goes, day and night, without fear, till one morning he finds himself opposite the desired haven, to which he has been steering. How has he found his way over the trackless deep? He has trusted his compass, his nautical almanac, his glass, and the heavenly bodies, and obeying their guidance. Without sighting land, he has steered so accurately that he has not to change a point to enter into port. It is a wonderful thing—that sailing or steaming without sight. Spiritually it is a blessed thing to leave the shores of sight and feeling, and to say good-bye to feelings, cheering providences, signs, tokens, etc. It is glorious to be far out on the ocean of Divine love, believ-

ing in God and steering for heaven, straight away by the Word of God. 'Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.' To them shall be administered a safe voyage on the way and an abundant entrance at the last into the haven of eternal rest."—*Spurgeon*.

FAITH IS A NECESSITY,

Growing out of the constitution of things. Nay, it is itself a part of the universe. It is necessary in human things and in Divine. It is commanded by God. It is the ordained condition of salvation from sin, and of all blessings, material and spiritual, except those within man's unaided grasp. It is the essential condition of fellowship with God; "for he that cometh to God (in communion) must *believe* that He is, etc."

BASIS OF FAITH.

By perception, we become acquainted with the material world, with our own souls, and their various faculties. By reason, we deduce one truth from another. Yet the greater part of our knowledge we derive from *testimony*. We know of persons, cities and events by testimony, and from no other source; yet we believe in their existence as readily and fully as though we had seen them. Though there is a difference between the evidence of demonstration and the evidence of testimony, yet the *effect* is the same in both cases. For though we have never seen it, we have no more doubt of the existence of such a country as Greenland than that we exist. Yet our belief rests on testimony, while our knowledge of our own existence rests upon conscious perception. Testimony is the basis of faith, not only in matters of

commerce, science and the ordinary transactions of life, but in spiritual matters, and eternal concerns. "If we receive the testimony of *men*, the testimony of *God is greater*." (1. John 5:9.) As to the testimony of God, there is no possibility of mistake or deception. Being all wise, He cannot be mistaken, and being holy, He will not deceive. Testimony, then, is the basis of all faith.

The basis of Christian, or saving faith, is the testimony of God. Impressions, unless they are in keeping with the Word, and we *know* they are from God, have nothing to do with faith in any way or measure. Nor have probabilities. Many Christians are ready to believe so far as things look *probable*. The province of faith *begins* where probabilities, that rest only on human reason, or the senses, *cease*, and where sight and sense fail. *Fundamentally*, then, the only basis of a correct Christian faith is the Word of God.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF FAITHS.

All that may be said of faith, in itself, may come under two heads: (1.) Universal or natural faith—a faith common to all men (2.) Saving faith, peculiar, at least in part, to the Christian. The second, or Christian faith, always includes the first or universal faith. Before defining these two faiths, I will call your attention to one or two classifications of faith, by authors and speakers, by which this subject of faith, it seems to me, is mystified. Mr. Wesley specifies the faith of the materialist, the deist, the heathen, the Jew, the Roman Catholic, and the Protestant. Others specify human faith, Divine faith, historic faith, head faith, heart faith, etc. One

finds the distinguishing characteristic of faith in its *subjective* nature. Another finds it in the nature of its *object*, and still another in the evidence or basis on which it rests. I cannot understand why the faith of the materialist should differ from the faith of the deist, heathen, or Jew simply because the *objects* of their faith differ. One man believes the earth round, another believes it flat. Is their faith different in *nature*, therefore?

If faiths must be classified according to their objects, then there can be no such classification, for then there would be as many *kinds* of faith as there are human beings, inasmuch as no two persons believe exactly the same in everything.

I think, upon careful investigation, all that may be properly said of faith, in itself, may come under the two heads specified.

Wherein, then, do universal and saving faith differ? Universal faith is purely *human*. It is a persuasion of the mind, resting on testimony, of things not seen, visible or invisible, which things, for the *present*, are objects neither of the senses, intuition, nor of demonstrative proof.

Saving faith is an act not only of the *mind*, but of the *heart*—an act of the whole man, involving complete surrender to God and *the helpfulness of the Holy Spirit*. It is an act of venturing trust in the accepted Word of God, for things not seen, visible or invisible, which things for the present, are objects neither of the senses, intuitions, nor of demonstrative proof.

The Christian's *natural* faith and that of the

wickedest man in the community are exactly the same.

In the further discussion of this subject of faith, I shall dwell on saving faith only.

#### DEFINITIONS OF SAVING FAITH.

In defining the nature of the *act* of faith, I shall not confine myself to one definition. Its phases, and the standpoints from which it is seen from time to time, by the multitude of believers, are legion.

A correct faith is not an *opinion*; but an outgoing of the soul—of the whole man, in surrender and reliance, God-ward. It is not simply *wishing*, but an energetic act with *will* power in it. It is not blind *credulity*, but the highest reason resting on substantiated truths. It is not *fancy*. Only recognized, basal facts make a rest for the sole of its foot. It is not *knowledge*. Knowledge is the perception of facts. Faith is an apprehension of present or future invisible realities, remote from perception, through the senses, intuition or demonstration.

#### SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF FAITH.

In the New Testament the word faith denotes two things, *viz.*: (1.) The *truths* of the Gospel of Christ, as in Acts (6:7), Rom. (1:5), Gal. (1:23), 1. Tim. (3:9). "The faith which was once delivered to the saints." (2.) An *act* by which we lay hold of the truths of the Gospel for salvation.

I will give you the substance of what the Rev. Mr. Jones has said on this subject in his book on "Christian Perfection." The two Greek words rendered, *faith* and *believe*, occur in the



New Testament over 500 times. *Pistuo* is the verbal root and expresses action. It occurs 256 times in the New Testament, and is translated *believe*. It signifies an act of the creature and is never predicated of God. The other form of the Greek text is *Pistis*, translated *faith*. It occurs 247 times in the New Testament, where its only legitimate meaning is an act of trust, performed by the *creature*.

The primary idea of these two words formulates itself in the mind as that act of the creature, by which the will subordinates the affections and life to his Creator. It implies the surrender of the whole man in the fullest sense, to his Redeemer for His use and glory. Faith is a compound of two ideas—acceptance and trust, and is a personal act or habit of the creature. There are two aspects of this act. (1.) The exercise of man's natural gifts on natural evidence. (2.) The exercise of his natural gifts under the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost with regard to spiritual or Divine things. Christian faith always embraces the personality and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The faith that receives the salvation of the individual has two elements: (1.) The spiritual apprehension of the invisible and eternal. (2.) Trust in Christ, in all His offices, as a personal Saviour. The last is the sole (crowning?) condition of salvation, successful prayer, and of spiritual power and progress. Some have said the nature of faith is three-fold. It includes a conviction of the understanding, assent of the will, and trust of the heart.

I define saving faith thus: The *penitent* sinner, having assented to the truthfulness of the testimony of God in the Gospel, believes in his *heart*, and with *all* his heart—affectionately—confidingly, that God, the Father, for Christ's sake, fulfilling His promise, *does now freely and fully forgive all the sins he has ever committed.*

Paul says in Hebrews, (11:1): "Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen," because, there is in it an element of assurance, that the things hoped for exist, and that we shall have them. It is to our inner consciousness, the same as a check on a bank, is to the senses. The check is the substance of the cash hoped for, and the evidence of the cash, yet, unseen. Faith gives the things hoped for *subsistence* in the minds and hearts of believers, just as though they had the most tangible proof of their existence and possession.

Miss Havergal says: "Every year, I might say almost every day, I believe I seem to see more clearly how all the rest, and gladness, and power of the Christian life hinges on *one* thing, and that is, taking God at His Word—believing that He really means *exactly* what He says, and accepting the very *words*, in which He reveals His goodness and grace, without *substituting* others, or altering the precise moods or tenses, which He has seen fit to use."

Mr. Muller, than whom, perhaps, no human being has more fully trusted God, says: "In the simplest manner in which I am able to express it, faith is the *assurance* that what God has said in His Word is true; and that God will

act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence, is faith." In regard to the *nature* of his own faith (as some have said that his faith was the "*gift* of faith"), he says: "My faith is just the same kind of faith that *all* of God's children have had. *My faith is their faith*, though there may be more of it, because my faith has been a little more developed, by exercise, than theirs."

The core element in the *act* of faith is that in it, by which we step out and beyond the reach of the senses, or perception; beyond apprehended facts; beyond facts apprehensible by the senses, intuition, or demonstration, to equally veritable facts, cognizable *only* by faith. As the telescope enables us to bring within our vision and investigation worlds almost infinitely beyond the reach of unaided sight, so faith is an instrument by which we bring within the compass of cognition and experience the most wonderfully blessed facts in the realm of the invisible and spiritual. Nay, it brings us *face to face* with the invisible and Infinite One, and, if possible, makes God *more* real—*evident*, than ourselves. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see God*"—*here and now!* "By the eye we bring within the mind that which is far away. We can bring the sun and far-off stars into the mind by a glance of the eye. So by trust (faith) we bring the Lord Jesus near to us, and, though He may be far away in heaven, He enters into our hearts. Only look to Jesus, for the hymn is strictly true:

‘There is life in a *look* at the Crucified One,  
There is life at this moment for thee.’”

To unbelief it is stepping out upon nothing; but to an intelligent and developed faith, *it is treading on the foundations of the universe!* Rev. S. A. Keen gives this illustration of the act of faith: “A professor in a university on the Pacific coast had been for ten years a seeker of full salvation. One day an aged minister called at his home. The conversation turned on Christian experience. The old man repeated what God had done for him. The professor said: ‘Father, I have been seeking this blessing for ten years. I believe I have put all on the altar, and that I live with all on the altar, but I haven’t received the power of sanctifying grace in my soul.’ Said the old man: ‘Do you want to receive it *now*?’ The professor replied: ‘Yes.’ ‘Well,’ said the minister, ‘let us kneel down here, and you may receive it now.’ When on their knees, the minister asked: ‘Professor, are you *wholly* given to God?’ The professor replied: ‘I believe I am.’ ‘You have put *all* on the altar?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Well, Professor, the Lord says, the altar sanctifieth the gift. *Is it true or not?*’ He dared not give God the lie and replied, ‘It is *true!*’ And instantly he felt that the ‘blood washed him whiter than snow.’”

Perhaps I can make this subject, as to the *nature* of faith clear to your minds by putting it thus: A child is at the point of making his escape from a third story window of a building on fire. The building is full of dense smoke and smothered flames. It is pitchy dark, within and without.

Under the window, on a ladder, reaching to within ten feet of the window sill, stands the father of the child. The child cannot *see* his father. He cannot see *anything*. He can simply feel the window jams and sill, and hear the voice of his father, saying: "My darling child, I'm your loving father. The building is on fire, and unless you escape by jumping from the window, you will be consumed by the flames. Jump into my arms, and I will save you." The child puts his hand out into the darkness, and feels for something *beyond* the window sill, and finds nothing, and cries: "O father! there is nothing to step out on. I'm afraid to let go the window!" Again he feels for something upon which he can step, and thereby save himself. The father reassures his child. "My darling, I'm underneath you! My arms are open to catch you! No harm can come to you if you will but step from the window. You know your father never deceived you. You know I am strong to catch and save you. If you will but *believe my word and jump*, you will be saved." The child reasons (for faith is not blind credulity or fancy): "I know my father is strong enough to save me. I know he cannot lie, and I'll take him at his word, and now with my life I leap into his arms!" He *acts* his faith and is saved!

He had *nothing—absolutely nothing upon which to rest* but the *word* of his father! He felt beyond the window sill (what seeking soul does not?) and found *nothing*. He peered into the darkness and could see *nothing—absolutely nothing*—not even his father. He listened, but could hear nothing but the voice of his father. Nothing on which to

rest his faith but the word—the *promise* of his father; yet with his life he leaps, and is saved! Any fancy or fanaticism? Any unwarranted credulity here? Is not this act of *faith* the most *rational* conceivable? He reasoned from the known to the unknown; and to the *unknowable*, except by faith. Christian faith is the highest—the crowning act of reason, for it does just what this child does. The child reasons from *known* facts to possible realities, cognizable only on the condition of his acted faith. “It is a *fact* that my father never deceived me. I’ll trust him again,” and faith is transmuted into knowledge—a knowledge attainable in no other way. The arms of his father are invisible realities, of which the *only assurance* the child has is the *testimony*—the word of his father; and the only way for the child to *know* that they are realities is by faith, to jump into them, outstretched, and ready to save him. “Blessed are they that have not seen (known) and yet have *believed*.”

Job most beautifully, and graphically pictures the nature and office of faith in these words: “Behold I go forward but (to the senses—perception) He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left where He doth work but I cannot behold Him (with my natural eyes) He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him; but He knoweth the way that I take. When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held His steps. His way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of

His lips. *I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."*

FAITH THE SIMPLEST YET MOST COMPLEX ACT.

There are as many ways in which faith works as there are possible variations of human emotions. It involves knowledge, reason, assent, hope, expectation, affection and trust.

THE SIMPLEST, YET, SUBJECTIVELY, THE MOST INCLUSIVE ACT.

It is the basis and backbone of, and involves and permeates, all Christian activities. Christ said (John 6:29): "This is the *work* of God that ye *believe* on Him, whom He hath sent." "Faith in Christ is the saving *work*. Faith is *work*. Faith and work are *one*. Faith is the work in which all works are embodied."—*Whcedon*. All works of righteousness are works of faith, and grow out of it, as the streams flow from their fountain-head. It is a movement of all the fundamental powers of the soul—of the very *roots* of our being, and is propagated to all of its branches—every faculty, appetite and passion. It brings us, not only into harmony with God, but with everything with which He is in harmony.

THE SIMPLEST, YET, OBJECTIVELY, THE ALL INCLUSIVE ACT.

Faith is the *only all* inclusive act of man. Its arms embrace all the good of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, and makes us "heirs of God and joint heirs (equal) with Jesus Christ, to that inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "All things are yours"—

who *believe*. It embraces God Himself, who is all and in all, in whom, and by whom, all good is.

SIMPLEST, YET MOST POTENT ACT.

Men of faith have made discoveries, created nations, and lifted them into a higher civilization, a purer morality, and an experience of the saving grace of God.

WHY IS FAITH MADE THE CONDITION OF SALVATION?

We may not know all the reasons why faith is made the condition of salvation, for there are many things in the economy of grace that are too high for us to attain to, yet with becoming reverence and modesty, it is our privilege to name those reasons that come within our reach. (1.) After the glad truths of the gospel had been given to man, it was necessary that those truths should be brought into contact with the lost souls of men, that they might produce conviction of sin, and lead sinners to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" and to "bear fruit unto holiness, that the end may be everlasting life." So far as we know, faith is the only act, by which the invisible may be brought to sight, and the spiritual be made, experimentally, *real*. The only modes by which truth may be known, are by perception and faith. That faith is by far the best medium of experiencing, and knowing the unseen and eternal things of God, is evident from the following facts, which are the subjects of personal observation. Said the Rev. James B. Walker: "Every time we come in contact with facts by perception, the effect upon the soul grows less; while on the contrary, those facts that are received by faith, produce, every time they are realized, a greater



effect upon the soul. The more frequently we *see*, the less we *feel*, the power of an object; while the more frequently we dwell upon an object, by faith, the more we feel its power." Faith is the only medium of bringing to our knowledge spiritual things. As the dispensation of God's grace is spiritual, and its verities invisible, faith is the only instrument by which they can be conveyed to the soul, and become matters of experience and knowledge. (2.) Jesus Christ is God, manifest in the flesh. This coming out of Himself, by God, in Christ, is putting Himself within the range of man's vision, *by the eye of faith*. God's purpose in thus making the power of His holiness manifest—discernible, is that he might change man into the same image (of holiness), "even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This transformation is through the medium of faith. Through the medium of a lens, the photographer throws and fixes the features of a material object, on the prepared sensitive plate. So, as God reveals Himself in Christ and is brought face to face with the believer's soul, through the eye of faith, the soul having been made sensitive by the operations of the Holy Spirit, is "changed into the same image, from glory to glory." (3.) "Faith has been selected as the channel of grace, because there is a natural adaptation in faith to be used as the receiver. (4.) Faith again is doubtless selected because it gives all the glory to God. It is by faith that it might be by grace and it is by grace that there might be no boasting, for God cannot endure pride. He will not give salvation in a

way that will suggest or foster pride. Paul says: 'Not of works lest any man should boast.' (5.) God has selected faith as the channel of salvation because it is a sure method, linking man with God, When man *confides* in God there is a point of union between them ; and that union guarantees blessing. \* \* O, the blessedness of faith, because it unites us to God ! (6.) Again, faith is chosen because it touches the springs of action, even common things of a certain sort, and lies at the root of all. (7.) God gives salvation to faith, because, by creating faith in us. (God does not create faith in us except when he bestows 'the *gift* of faith'). He thus touches the mainspring of our emotions and actions. (8.) Again, a reason why faith is made a condition of salvation is, it has the power of working by love. It influences the affections towards God, and draws the heart after the *best things*."—*Spurgeon*.

#### UNBELIEF THE GREAT SIN.

Unbelief is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of sins. "He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record God gave of His Son." A very important condition of faith, perhaps the most important, is that we *confess* our sin of unbelief to God frankly and fully. In doing this, we cannot do better than to adopt the language of the father whose son was possessed of a devil: "Lord, I believe ; help *Thou* mine *unbelief* !" In this remarkable sentence appear at least two very important truths: He saw, felt, and confessed the existence of unbelief in his heart.

This was the best evidence possible of a measure of faith. For he who sees, feels, and *renounces* his unbelief, in the very nature of things, becomes a believer. For he who renounces his unbelief in one of two opposites, necessarily believes in the other. Another important truth that appears in this noted sentence is, the appeal to Christ for help against his felt and confessed unbelief; the best means possible for strengthening his faith; for such a prayer is the voice of faith—faith in its “Author and Finisher,” at whose throne unbelief directly aims its blow.

If unbelief still struggles in the heart, as for its life, we must disown it and fight it to its death by declaring our faith in God's veracity. The most rational and effective method by which to do this, is asking for Divine help against our unbelief. The shortest cut to the defeat and annihilation of unbelief is to confess it to God. God and unbelief are deadly antagonistic. Confession of our unbelief is laying violent hands upon it, and dragging its deadly and slimy form within range of God's thunderbolts. The human heart is the citadel of unbelief where it defies even the Almighty. But it remains in the heart, only by the *suffrance* of the unbeliever. Confession of it is bringing it out of the heart and turning it over to God, under whose burning hatred of sin it writhes and withers, and dies. “*Lord we believe, help Thou our unbelief!*”

HOW MUCH FAITH IN THE CHURCH?

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?” Among Christian nations there is a large degree of *belief*—

theoretical faith, that the Bible is the Word of God. This is especially true of church members. But, comparatively, how little real, living, actual faith, on an average, among church members to-day, when measured by the *available grace of God*, and the *possibilities* of faith. What proportion of all possible faith is exercised? What proportion of church members attend the social means of grace? What proportion of those who do attend have a mighty faith that brings the blessing, in its fulness, from above? Again, I ask, what proportion? One tenth? One twentieth? One fiftieth? One hundredth? *This is not an idle question.* What if all possible faith were exercised by all Christians? The degree of the grace of God enjoyed in our own hearts is the measure of our faith, for blessings for ourselves. How nearly does our faith measure up to *all possible grace*? The degree of the operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of sinners, other things being equal, is the measure of our faith for their salvation. Brethren, if the salvation of sinners were conditioned upon the faith we *now* have for them, how much hope is there that they will be saved?

#### THE WORD OF FAITH.

Brethren, will we search God's Book earnestly and prayerfully, that we may find a rock basis, and every encouragement to our faith? "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of *faith*, which we preach." "The word of *faith*" is the word to be *believed unto salvation!* It is of infinite importance that we "search the Scriptures" for the "exceeding

great and precious promises" of God; and having found them, we should *dwell* upon them, put our names into them, realize that to *disbelieve* them is to make *God a liar*, and as we cry: "Lord, I believe! help Thou mine unbelief;" continue to cry: "I can believe, I will believe, I *do* believe that Jesus answers *this* moment!" The truth of God is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses in working in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure; whether it be to convict of sin, to help to repent, or believe unto salvation. Hence Paul, writing to the Thessalonians (1. Thes. 2:13), says: "For *this* cause also thank we God, without ceasing, *because*, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of *men*, but as it *is*, in *truth*, the word of God, which (mark!) *effectually* worketh in you that *believe*." "Faith, mighty faith, the *promise* sees." Brethren, do you *now realize* God's word, "A sure support against despair?" As you claim this moment, in Christ's name, the desire of your hearts, can you say, as you turn your face up to your Heavenly Father's face: "Lord, I believe Thy *every* word—Thy *every* promise *true*?"

## FAITH.

Faith, like an unsuspecting child,  
Serenely resting on its mother's arm,  
Reposing every care upon her God,  
Sleeps on His bosom, and expects no harm.

Receives with joy the promises He makes,  
Nor questions of His purpose or His power;  
She does not doubting ask, "Can this be so?"  
The Lord has said it, and there needs no more.

However deep be the mysterious word,  
However dark, she disbelieves it not;  
Where reason would examine, faith obeys,  
And, "It is written!" answers every doubt.

—*The Watchman.*

## LECTURE VIII.

*PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FAITH; OR,  
IS SAVING FAITH A GIFT OF GOD? ALSO, THE  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAVING FAITH  
AND "THE GIFT OF FAITH."*

### A FATAL MISTAKE.

It is a most fatal error to suppose that saving faith is a gift of God, in the same sense that pardon is a gift of God. God has given us the faith-faculty just as He has given us the love-faculty. Inhering in the faith-faculty is the power to exercise a *natural* faith. On certain conditions the Holy Spirit gives us the power to exercise saving faith—"power to become the sons of God."

The faith-faculty is constitutional, and its operations are under the control of the will. God commands: "Believe." The command implies the power to believe. Then we may, or may not believe, as we *will*. The faith-faculty may act on evidence, satisfactory to reason, whether it be an act of common or saving faith. To illustrate, there is the *organ* of sight, the *power* of sight, and the *act* of seeing. The organ and power of sight are of God; the act of seeing, or refusing to see, is ours. So the organ of faith—the faith-faculty, and the power to believe unto salvation are of God. The act is ours.

Perhaps I can make the above statement, as

to the Divine and human, in faith, more easily understood, as follows: In Acts (3:16) Peter, exhorting the Jews to repentance, who looked so earnestly on them (Peter and John), as though by their own power or holiness they had made the lame man to walk, said: "And His name through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him (Christ), hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Whether this faith of the apostles and cripple was "the *gift* of faith," I will not discuss at present. What I wish to call your attention to especially, is that part of the sentence that reads: "Yea, the faith which is *by* Him—by His *help*, hath given him this perfect soundness." The faith of Christ, on certain conditions, was transfused into the faith of the apostles, or the lame man, or both. The literal meaning is, the faith which is *caused* by Him. Then, is not saving faith the gift of God, absolutely? I answer, no. But, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, Christ's all-powerful faith vivifies our natural faith, and as we receive "the full assurance of (Christ's) faith," we are enabled to perform an *act* of faith wholly our *own*. "For twenty years," said a gentleman, "I had waited for God to put faith into me, when He had been waiting all these years for *me* to put faith in His Word."

## SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY.

Too many Christians, desirous of relieving themselves of responsibility, ask: "Is not faith a gift of God?" In support of their theory they refer us to Eph. (2:8), which reads as follows:

"For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." The question is: Which are we to understand as being the gift of God—the grace of salvation or faith? Dr. Adam Clark says this question is answered by the Greek text: "And this (*touto*—this salvation) not of you; it is the gift of God; not of works: 'so that no man can boast.' The relative this (*touto*), which is in the neuter gender, cannot stand for faith (*pistis*), which is in the feminine." Is not faith the gift of God? Yes, as to the grace by which it is produced; but the *grace*, or power to believe, and the *act* of believing, are two different things. Without the grace or power to believe, no man ever did, or can believe; but with that power, the act of faith is man's own. To the Philippians (1:29) Paul says: "For unto you it is given (a gift of grace) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but," etc. This text clearly states that, in Christ's behalf, it is given us to believe—that is, we are helped to believe. Paul writes to the Galatians (2:20): "I live, yet not I, \* \* and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God," etc. The revised version reads: "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith—the faith which is (inherent) in the Son of God." As Christ's life in us is the soul of our life, and as the Holy Spirit's intercessional prayer is the soul of our prayer, so the faith of the Son of God is the soul and substance of our saving faith. Again, in Hebrews (12:2) Paul says: "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," The Author, Captain, Leader and Perfecter of our faith. He helps us



to begin to believe, to continue to believe and to perfectly believe.

SAVING FAITH BOTH DIVINE AND HUMAN.

Then how can faith be both Christ's as a gift and yet ours, and an act for which we are responsible? We begin by believing the testimony of God on the basis of reason. This is as far as natural faith can go. In order to the faith that saves, our natural faith must be impregnated, vivified, and empowered by "the faith of the Son of God." The two faiths blend and become one faith, neither natural nor supernatural, but both Divine and human. The sperm cell of "the faith of the Son of God"—the grace of faith, quickens in the faith-faculty the germ cell of the faith of man—natural faith. Thus "the faith of the Son of God" blends with the natural faith of man, and the two thus become one faith—saving faith. This will account for the impossibility for the *disobedient* soul to exercise saving faith. God withholds the sperm cell, hence saving faith cannot be generated. The Holy Ghost is the great agent in the generation of saving faith, just as He was the agent in generating "God manifest in the flesh." Through the infinite power of the Holy Spirit, acting instead of the Lord Jesus Christ, our natural faith is quickened while we pray. Reason about it as we may; concede to our human volition a certain potential force, the full surrender of which God requires at the time of prayer; still, that faith which exclaims: "It shall be done," is not entirely of ourselves. The Divine

Spirit enkindles our natural faith with "the faith of God."

A proper understanding of the co-operation of the Divine and human in the whole of salvation, is of the utmost importance, and should often be in mind, if we would be apt learners in the school of prayer. Every act in working out our salvation has in it two elements, the Divine and human. "Without Me," said Christ, "ye can do *nothing*." "Through Christ which strengtheneth me," said Paul, "I can do all things." In certain conditions God holds this matter of saving faith entirely in His own hand. To the disobedient soul He says: "Without *Me*, ye can do nothing." The obedient soul has the matter of faith entirely in his power, and to him the Master says, "Be it unto thee, even as *thou* wilt." In other words, unbounded enabling grace is pledged, on which the obedient soul may draw at will. The incoming and indwelling Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, arouses the conscience, revives the memory, strengthens the will, clarifies the reason, intensifies the affections, quickens and empowers the faith-faculty, purifies the heart and empowers the soul for service.

The following may not be a perfect illustration, but I think it will convey the idea I wish you to get. I persuade my friend that a certain statement that I make is true; he fully believes my statement. I believe fully, and transfuse of my faith into his mind. I so present the matter and persuade him of its reality, that he believes it as fully as I do; but not without an act of his own. Is not this just what the Holy Spirit does,

as Christ's representative, when He enables us to believe, with all our hearts, the statements of God's Word? He transfuses into our natural faith Christ's own conviction and certainty; so that we fully surrender ourselves, not only to a belief in that of which we are persuaded, but, by act, step out on the truths on which the persuasion rests. Thus "I live by the faith (persuasion) of the Son of God," that is, I am persuaded by His persuasion. I believe by His belief. He believes, and by the ministry of His Spirit, persuades and enables me to believe. This is further illustrated by Christ's and Martha's faith at the tomb of Lazarus. Days before Christ came from "beyond Jordan" He offered the prayer of faith for resurrecting power, that "the Son of God might be glorified" by the resurrection of Lazarus. Hence Christ said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me (heard and answered My prayer), and I know that Thou hearest (and answerest) Me always." Christ said to Martha: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha replied: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day." Jesus said unto her: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die; believest thou this?"

Martha said: "I know that even now whatsoever *Thou* wilt ask of God (in prayer), God will give it *Thee*." Do you see how Martha's faith is stimulated and strengthened in the presence of Christ's all-masterful faith and resurrecting power? Christ's all-appropriating faith permeates

Martha's weak and staggering faith, and, somehow, she is persuaded that Christ is about to do some stupendous act, by which relief shall come to her sorrow-stricken heart. Yet, when they came to the grave, and Christ requested, "Take ye away the stone," Martha protested against exposing the corpse. But the Master, bracing up Martha's wavering faith with His promise and His own assurance, lovingly rebuked her. "*Said* I not unto thee, that if *thou* wouldst *believe*, thou shouldst see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Then Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! and he that was dead came forth." Had it not been for Christ's faith and persuasion, as he talked and reasoned with her, Martha never would have—nay, never could have believed for the resurrection of her brother. Yet, as I have said, we have a part in this matter, the same as my friend has a part in believing that of which I persuaded him. "He (the Spirit) shall take of the things of Mine, and shall show them unto you." Not only this, but persuade and enable them to put faith to its use, by taking hold of the truth, with the same belief, trust and power that Christ himself does. What was true of Christ's faith, and Martha's faith, is equally true of Christ's faith and the faith of every believer to-day. O, how encouraging to the hesitating, questioning, yet sincere soul! This explains how, in what sense, and to what degree, *saving* faith is the gift of God, while yet we are responsible for having faith, or a want of faith.

GOD'S FRIENDS ONLY, CAN BELIEVE.

Because the faith-faculty and the grace to believe are of God, faith is said to be a fruit of the Spirit. I have said that when the Christian obeys God's Word he is enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to perform an act of faith impossible to a man in rebellion against God, because the Holy Spirit will not assist a rebel against God, to take, by faith, what belongs only to those who obey and love God. The wisdom and justice of God in thus guarding the sacred blessings of the kingdom of His grace and glory from the polluted grasp of wicked men, are apparent. But for this guard, wicked men would make merchandise of Divine things—of the Holy Ghost Himself, to serve their own selfish and wicked purposes. Simon Magus coveted the privilege of being the medium of transferring the Holy Ghost, and offered them (the apostles) money, saying: "Give me also the power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." Peter said to him: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (It would make no difference to a wicked man whether he could get it by money or by faith, except, if by faith he could save his money.) Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; (why?) for thy *heart is not right in the sight of God*, for I perceive that thou art in the *gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity!*"

ILLUSTRATION.

The following illustration will serve, I think, to make clear to your minds the fact that we

cannot believe unto salvation without Divine assistance. The little boy whose mouth waters for the luscious fruit that hangs on the tree, reaches his tiny hand to pluck it, but cannot grasp it. His loving father picks him up in his strong arms and lifts him to where the little eager hand grasps the coveted fruit. The boy gets by the *aid of another* that which he could not have gotten unaided. So with us in regard to God's blessings, promised only to the obedient. A common faith may grasp a thousand earthly blessings, but only the hand of saving faith, as the Holy Spirit lifts the obedient soul God-ward and heaven-ward, can pluck the luscious fruit of "the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God;" or any material blessing needed, but which cannot be had but by Divine intervention in answer to prayer.

#### THE DIVINE CONVICTION IN FAITH.

The operations of the Holy Spirit carry in themselves the evidence of their divinity, and because of this fact, where the Holy Spirit assists the infirmity of our faith-faculty, our faith has in it a supernatural assurance; the assurance of Christ Himself, that what we are asking for we shall receive. Hence, faith is said to be the substance of things hoped for, etc. This assurance increases as faith strengthens.

This Divine element in faith is what Mr. Wesley makes the *whole* of faith, when he says: "Faith is a Divine conviction," etc. In Hebrews (11:1) Paul says: "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not

seen." According to this Scripture statement, there is an evidential power, or element, in faith—"the evidence of things not seen." Wherein do the witness in faith and "the witness of the Spirit" differ? (1.) As to time. The witness in faith is antecedent to that of the Spirit in grace. (2.) As to its nature. The witness in faith is a supernatural evidence, or persuasion—inherent in the grace of faith—that God hears and answers our prayer. The "witness of the Spirit" is an operation of the Spirit of God on the conscious soul of the believer in Christ, whereby he is assured that he is a child of God, or that his prayer has been answered. Again, there is a Divine, evidential power inherent in the "fruits of the Spirit," that compels consciousness of their presence and possession in the heart. Thus, love evidences its presence to our conscious nature; so "of joy, peace," etc. The Rev. S. A. Keen, in his "Faith Papers," makes this distinction: "The witness of faith is the conscious reception of salvation. The witness of the Spirit is the conscious realization of salvation." I ask, is it possible to consciously *receive* salvation and not consciously *realize* its reception?

#### EXISTING FAITH NECESSARILY OPERATIVE.

In every case in which the faith-faculty is quickened toward God, there is a continuous operation of this faculty—a continuous trust in God—as in every case in which the affections are quickened toward God, there is a continuous outgoing of love to God. The quickened faith-faculty, as long as the believer so wills, trusts as necessarily and as naturally as the sun shines.

The action of the will brings the faith-faculty in range with the Holy Spirit's quickening and enabling operations, and the necessary result is saving faith in God. The faith-faculty may be so quickened, and its infirmity so energized, that there may be an *abiding* and perfect trust in God for all needed good, and unwavering trust in God in the most trying hour and power of darkness, as certainly as in the noontide of victory! Yet, even such a faith, while it may take a thousand blessings with ease, may not take other specified blessings without the greatest effort.

The faith-faculty is quickened in proportion as we accept God's will and receive the Holy Ghost; just as our love-faculty is quickened and strengthened with Divine love in proportion as we accept God's will and receive the Holy Spirit; or, as the memory is quickened when the Holy Spirit "brings all things to our remembrance," etc.

#### CONDITION OF CO-OPERATION BY GOD AND MAN.

Co-operation of the human and Divine in salvation is possible only by the union of the Divine and human in Christ—"God with us." Christ is the only point of contact between God and man. He is not only a connecting link between God and man, but He is a conductor through whom heaven's blessings flow to earth—God's blessings to man. The Divine nature is the fountain-head, the man Christ Jesus the depository and dispenser of grace. The all comprehensive condition of receiving saving grace is that we come *into* Christ. The *last* act of obedience is *believing*. Faith is stepping *out* of the world and *into* Christ.



## A SKEPTIC IN PRAYER.

I said the Holy Spirit would enable the believer in Christ to perform an act of faith impossible to a person in rebellion against God. This statement should doubtless be qualified by saying that such an impulse from God may come to a sinner in his great extremity, influencing him to pray in faith for some needed good, material or spiritual, though at the time he has not formally repented of his sins, and believed in Christ for pardon. But in any case in which the prayer has been answered so far as I know, such impulse and grace enabling him to believe for other good, became the means of his becoming a Christian. This yielding to the Divine impulse is yielding to God really, as the sequel always proves. The state of heart and the reliance on God are such as God requires before the initiatory step is taken on coming into the kingdom of grace.

## ALLSTON'S PRAYER.

"Washington Allston, the celebrated artist and poet, tells us how he was led from jesting on sacred subjects to an abiding reverence for them, and to a religious life. Having married a sister of the eminent Dr. Channing, he made his second visit to Europe, and settled in London as an artist. He met with little success, and for a time was at a loss for the means of procuring the necessaries of life. Reflecting one day, with a feeling of almost desperation upon his condition, he found himself all at once filled with the hope that God would help him if he only asked His help. So he locked his door, withdrew to a

corner of his room, and, falling on his knees, prayed earnestly for help from on high.

While thus kneeling in supplication he, was aroused by some one knocking at the door. He opened it to a stranger, who announced himself as the Marquis of Stafford, who inquired if his painting of the angel Uriel was sold. Receiving a negative reply, the nobleman paid him four hundred pounds for the beautiful production, and was so pleased that he introduced the poor artist to the leading nobility and gentry, and thus to both fame and fortune, and to all the success he desired. Allston never looked upon this as a mere happy coincidence; but the feeling that led him to prayer, and the immediate relief which followed, he always regarded as the direct interposition of God in his behalf in the hour of his need. As the result he was led to the Christian life, and fixed devotional habits became predominant traits in his character to the end of his life."

#### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

From the Scriptures and the foregoing statements it will be seen that we are entirely responsible for the act of faith or for unbelief. We are commanded, or instructed, in the Word to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and to "have faith in God." God holds us responsible for not believing, for, "he that believeth not shall be damned"—for his unbelief. The Holy Spirit communicates the grace of faith on condition of perfect obedience to God. The sincere are enabled to obey God perfectly. Therefore we are as entirely responsible for having faith

as though we, of ourselves, were entirely competent to put forth the act of saving faith.

SAVING FAITH AND "THE GIFT OF FAITH."

What is the nature of the gift of faith? Wherein does it differ from ordinary Christian faith? The Bible clearly teaches that, aside from ordinary saving faith, which is an assisted act of the believer, there is a Divinely bestowed or begotten faith; while of the nature of ordinary Christian faith it "operates in spheres which are not available to saving faith, or to the fullness of faith; it apprehends results which only the supernatural illuminations of the Holy Spirit reveal to the soul as possible to faith. Without such a supernatural revelation, the existence and exercise of charismatic faith, or the gift of faith, is impossible." First Cor.(12:4-11) reads: "Now there are diversities of gifts (gracious endowments leading to miraculous or extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit), and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord (various offices in the Church 'He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, etc.' The qualifications for such offices, as well as the appointments themselves, coming immediately from the one-Lord Jesus Christ), and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, which worketh all in all (miraculous operations on others; expulsion of demons; producing death as in the case of Annanias and Sapphira; proceeding from the Father as the fountain of all goodness and power, and the immediate dispenser of every good and any perfect gift).

But the manifestation of the same Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal. (Every one receives of the gifts of God by the helpful operations of the Holy Spirit, not for his private advantage, but for the common benefit of the Church). For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit (supernatural gifts, manifesting the manifold wisdom of God and His infinite benevolence in the gifts to man of 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'), to another faith by the same Spirit,"etc.—the gift of faith. It is evident that there was ordinary Christian faith and the *gift* of faith, and the question arises wherein does one differ from the other? The gift of faith is a special Divine endowment of the faith-faculty—as absolutely a gift of God as pardon. It was a peculiar impulse that came upon the disciples when any difficult matter was to be performed. It was an undoubtable and Divinely inwrought conviction that its object should be realized, accompanied by a full consciousness of the presence and possession of a supernatural power to accomplish its object. It was super-added to ordinary Christian faith. While it was distinctly and absolutely a gift of God, yet it operated upon and through the faith-faculty of the believer. It was much narrower in its scope than ordinary Christian faith, yet it was not confined to the miraculous. When an extraordinary faith on the part of a believer or the Church was necessary to accomplish God's purpose, this gift—endowment, was imparted as to-day. This gift of faith doubtless abounded in

the early Church; not perhaps a gift *abiding* with any believer, but given as *occasion required*; and will doubtless again abound when the Church rises to the Pentecostal and Millennial level, and its spiritual power dominates over all governmental, commercial, social, and ecclesiastical movements.

#### THE DIFFERENCE.

Wherein does the "gift of faith" differ from "the full assurance of faith?" There certainly is a *full assurance of faith aside* from the *gift* of faith. May not this full assurance of faith be as assuring as the gift of faith? I think so. The gift of faith, is wholly and Divinely inwrought. A fully assuring, ordinary Christian faith is the result of the co-operation of both God and man. God gives man the grace of saving faith, by the use of which he is enabled to believe unto salvation. The holy impulse to pray, that came to Allston in his temporal need, and the assurance that his prayer should be answered were gifts from God, but no more assuring than the Divine assurance that inheres in the ordinary Christian faith that is perfect for its object; an instance of which is given by the Rev. S. A. Keen, as an illustration of the gift of faith, but I think wholly without any support, either from the Word, or Christian experience: A Christian wife, whose husband was an officer on a Mississippi steamer, (which was burned,) as she prayed that her husband would be preserved and saved, not knowing of the disaster, was assured that his life would be spared and that he would be saved. When, the day following she received a telegram, stating that her husband had perished, folded it and

said, "It is not so. He is saved from the flames and waves, and shall be from his sins." A few days later he arrived at home and was soon converted. The faith of this Christian wife, after praying earnestly, was of the same nature as the faith of Luther, who, after praying nearly all night, with some of his friends, exclaimed: "Deliverance has come! Deliverance has come!"

May "the spirit of grace and supplication"—"the gift of faith," be spontaneously "poured out" upon a believer for any object specified by the Spirit, in the Word, or by Himself independently of a direct and conscious appeal to the Word, and yet "the prayer of faith" not be offered? Most certainly. How? By a failure of the believer to move with the Holy Spirit when the "spirit of grace and supplication" is poured upon him, and the gift of faith is bestowed, for the believer has his part in the matter, that is, by the use of the spirit of grace and supplication to transmute the gift of faith into his own act of faith. But just as though we knew from God Himself (if the "gift of faith" is bestowed) that a soul may be saved, and as we value a human soul, we should not fail to prevail, as we easily may. For a failure to prevail may be followed by the eternal loss of that soul. The power to believe is always available, on certain conditions, to every person who has not sinned away his day of grace. This fact is the ground of justice in God's threatenings against those who believe not. Faith may be just as full in every heart to-day as in the apostle's times, provided we receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost. Baptized

with this blessed fulness, the heavens will open with their matchless effulgence. Every deadly missile, so far as inward peace is concerned, will then fall harmless at our feet ; for the springs of our joy are all found in the unwasting resources of God.

“ My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Saviour Divine.  
Take all my guilt away;  
O, let me from this day,  
Be wholly Thine.”



## LECTURE IX.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FAITH; OR, FAITH, ITS BEGINNING, GROWTH AND PERFECTION.*

#### THE GREATEST OF ALL LESSONS.

“The greatest of all lessons for the human heart to learn, is perfect trust in God. Certainly it is the most difficult. We think we have learned it so well that we are ready for any test; when lo! a new and perplexing phase of experience confronts us, and we go back with the feeling of a child ‘kept in’ to con over the page already wet with impatient tears. *Theoretically*, we trust God; *practically*, we doubt Him. If our *actual* trust were up to the measure of our *theoretical* belief, life would be relieved of more than half its wear and tear. Not that earth will ever be just like heaven in the present order of things. The minor key will run through its harmony to the end. It is only in the age to come that ‘God will wipe all tears from all faces;’ but there may be harmony where it is now discord. The whole of Bible teaching and the whole of Christian discipline seem concentrated upon this one great lesson—‘*to the intent ye may believe.*’

In order to develop that stalwart character whose price is above rubies, God makes this *not an easy thing to do*. Nothing worth having, as a rule, is



easy to get. A stanch trust in God which carries one steadily over the crest and down into the trough of the billow, is gained only by patiently enduring, which means something 'too deep for the touch of a word.'"

The questionings of honest doubt are the struggles of faith into the light.

"An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light;  
And with no language but to cry."

To be content with such a faith is not well;  
to despise it, is cruel and wrong.

#### LITTLE AND GREAT FAITH.

When the disciples had faith, but in its beginning, Christ said to them: "O, ye of little faith." Weak, strong, and perfect faith indicate its several stages. An infant faith often staggers at the promises of God. A faith ripened into manhood has no admixture of doubt, and implies the fullest confidence in God's character, and the most unswerving dependence on His Word. The strength of a matured faith is seen when it is put to the severest tests; as when the three Hebrews went into the fiery furnace rather than bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. Little faith seems strong when supported by favorable results that appeal to the outward senses, but fails when surroundings are dark and obstacles intervene. The favorite song of the little faith of old professors is:

"O, could we make our doubts remove,  
These gloomy doubts that rise;  
And view the Canaan that we love,  
With unbeclouded eyes."

One devil shall chase a thousand of such

doubters, and two put ten thousand to flight. A perfect faith courts the onslaught of the enemy, and with holy joy anticipates the victory. It is as firm as the Rocky Mountains and aggressive as the cyclone. After the conflict it sings:

"I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet;  
And Jesus abides with me there,  
And His Spirit and blood make my cleansing complete;  
And His perfect love casteth out fear."

#### STEPS IN THE GROWTH OF FAITH.

The steps in the increase of faith-power, are like the steps of a flight of stairs. It is taking one step after another, until we reach the landing. Then comes the *rest* of faith. There are steps in overcoming doubt, just as the increase of physical strength is an overcoming of physical weakness. We necessarily begin with little and may end with much. As the attenuated kite string that spanned the yawning Niagara, was replaced by the mighty cable, over which is transferred a wealth of material good for the needy, so the tiny faith thread of the newly born soul, which spanned the great gulf between earth and heaven, gives place to the omnipotent faith-cable of the perfected believer, over which from heaven to earth are transferred to the race, "The unsearchable riches of Christ."

#### "THE REST OF FAITH."

There is a perfection of faith-power that abides, that enables its possessor to be joyfully triumphant three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. This is the power of matured faith, or if you please, a fully grown faith. A fully grown faith always implies an easy triumph over doubt,

and brings to the soul the restfulness of God. "The rest of faith" cannot be had, until faith for a specified object has sometime passed its several stages; or, until faith has done its work. "First the blade, then the corn, after that the full corn in the ear." Hence instructions, to the petitioner, are often erroneous, when they would lead to cease all effort except to "just trust." The *rest* of faith can be only *after* the struggle, as the rest on the mountain's peak can be only after the struggle that reaches the peak. Woe be to him who seeks the "rest of faith" far below the peak of perfect victory. A perfect and abiding trust in God accompanies a matured faith, or follows an *effectual* act of faith, for a specific object. No one ever yet learned to float on the water who did not first pass the transition of faith, from its beginning to perfection; that is, no one ever floated in the first effort to do so. When the conviction comes, that you have done all you can, then you can simply trust, and not until then. It is then that faith becomes "the substance of things hoped for, etc." Why did Jacob wrestle *all night* with the covenant angel, and not "simply trust?" Why did the poor widow have to worry down the unjust judge, and not "simply trust him?" Why did Elijah in an agony of prayer cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees, and not "simply trust," for rain? Why did Christ plead with the Father with strong crying and tears, before the strengthening angel came to his relief, if "simply trusting" was all that He needed to do? Certainly if any one could do this at

once, Christ could. He cried mightily in an agony, simply because it was *absolutely* necessary, that his faith might be tested and increased to the uttermost; and that He might be made "perfect through suffering." The *rest* of victory cannot come until *after* the battle. Christ spent the whole night in prayer. Why not "simply trust" at once, and receive the desired blessing? On the other hand. There is great danger of "simply trusting" in a great effort, instead of trusting in God. There is a time to wrestle in prayer, and a time to stop wrestling, and "simply trust." A time to fly into the face of the enemy and a time to "stand still and see the salvation of God."

"O, believe on Jesus now  
As the bird on yonder bough  
Trusts the branch to which it clings;  
And while trusting, rests and sings.  
So on Christ, the branch, confide—  
True and trusty, strong, and tried;  
'Neath His clusters build thy nest;  
Finding safety, food, and rest."

#### EXAMPLE OF PERFECT FAITH.

"Father Moon," of Muskegon, Mich., one of God's noble men, now gone to glory, on the anniversary of his seventy-second birthday, in Christ, (in the ninety-second year of his life), said in the Michigan Christian Advocate of February 15, 1890: "The lesson of entire trust was a hard lesson for me to learn. It seemed to me as if I was stepping out on nothing; but O, what it brought to me!" "The same may be said of my faith," said the sainted Alfred Cookman. "It seems to be more clearly and fully a fruit of

the Spirit, in which my own spontaneity mingles, than a trust that requires effort." This was Cookman's experience, after a marvelous growth in grace, and *years* of the *most* earnest, wrestling prayer in the development of his faith. "Father Moon" again says: "Of late I have been proving, as never before, that there is an internal Revelator—the blessed Holy Ghost. We speak of St. John as the Revelator, but there is a greater Revelator within. The blessed Holy Spirit is leading and keeping me to-day." The Christian ripened in faith is careful (anxious) for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, lets his requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. The moment the lips of the ripe Christian are parted in prayer, those present at once feel that a giant has gripped the promise of God for a certain answer. Yet, his faith in its beginning was weak and faltering, and failed possibly nine times out of ten to receive what was asked. A developing faith is the opening bud; perfect faith is the beautiful, expanded flower.

#### FAITH APPREHENDS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

To a perfect faith, Christ becomes doubly precious. It rapturously sings :

"O could I speak the matchless worth,  
O could I sound the glories forth,  
Which in my Saviour shone,  
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost Divine."

To the believer whose faith is perfect the Holy

Spirit becomes the object of holy affection, and the blessed, abiding Comforter. The Bible becomes a new and illuminated book ; not directly by faith, but by the ministry of the constantly indwelling Revealer and Interpreter of truth—the Holy Spirit, who condescends to “abide” not only with, but in him who is “full of faith.”

#### HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS A FRUIT OF FAITH.

Another result of a perfect faith is heavenly mindedness. Said Mrs. Prof. Lacroix, days before her death, “I am done with earth. I have begun to live in heaven.” Many a ripe Christian has, long since, begun to live in heaven. As Dr. S. A. Keen has beautifully said, “before it (the soul) gets there, locally, God transfers His kingdom and glory to the heart, making it a province of the land of light in advance. The whole realm of its inner being is annexed to the heavenly empire, and its citizenship is transferred from earth to the heavenly city. O, glorious, wondrous faith, which enables us to know our heaven begun below.”

#### ILLUSTRATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH.

In the eleventh chapter of John is given a remarkably instructive illustration of the development and perfecting of the Christian's faith for a specific result, and of the encouragement and helpfulness that our patient and sympathizing Divine Master tenders every one of His disciples, in his struggles against the current and buffeting waves of unbelief. I refer to the conversation between Christ and Martha, regarding her faith as to the resurrection of her brother. The greatly afflicted sisters, whose

brother Lazarus was sick, sent word to the Master: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." Christ purposely stayed away from the home at Bethany till several days after Lazarus' death and burial. The blessed Master often withholds a blessing asked that He may bestow a greater. The joy of receiving a resurrected brother from the tomb was far greater than to have received him from a couch of sickness, restored to health. But the great end sought, in the delay, was that God might be glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus. In due time Christ returned to Bethany, and "Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him," \* \* and said unto Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Martha had faith to believe that Christ could have restored her sick brother to health. Yet hope, somehow, still clung for relief, and appears in her words: "But I know that even *now*, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." What does Martha mean?

"But I know, etc." Somehow a wonderful inspiration reached her hope and faith. Why? Because she was in the presence of Christ's victorious faith and resurrecting power. Christ utters the most comforting and assuring words: "Thy brother shall rise again." O, what consolation these words brought to the sister's heart! Yet she hardly dared hope that this meant anything this side of the general resurrection. Yet she dared hope: "But I know, etc." Too true a representation of thousands who

have spiritually dead friends. "Sometime, I hope, they will rise again."

Present faith brings a present salvation. Martha's trembling faith defers the matter. "Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But could hardly measure up to a present resurrection. How often our trembling faith defers the resurrection of the "dead in trespasses and sins." "I believe they will be saved sometime." An unwavering faith says, "Save, a present Saviour Thou." Christ replies to Martha's trembling faith, "I am the resurrection." The resurrection is present with you, Martha. He who has the keys to unlock every tomb stands before you. I am the plague of the grave and the conqueror of death. My voice shall wake the dead in the resurrection at the last day. Christ wished to lift Martha's thought from her dead brother to *Himself*, the resurrection and the life. "*I am the resurrection.*" So *our* faith must look to Jesus, its "Author and Finisher." Martha, "I am the resurrection" *this* moment. Fix your wavering thought and trembling faith on Me! "I am the life." Cannot I, who gave your brother life in the beginning, restore that life to-day? "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead (as Lazarus is), yet shall he live (a spiritual and eternal life in paradise); and whosoever liveth and believeth (as you do, Martha—trusting disciple) in Me, shall never die"—shall never experience soul death. "Believest thou this?" Martha, do you believe what I say? He sought to rivet Martha's faith to His *word*. "Believest thou this?" I not only *will* be the



"resurrection, in the last day," but *am* this moment. Martha replies: "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Christ gave her something on which to rest her faith. Christian man—woman here is where your faith and my faith must rest. "*I am* the resurrection." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." "Believest thou this?" Martha began to believe that something was going to be done, and went and called her sister Mary. "When Mary was come \* \* and when Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled," or, as the margin reads: "Troubled Himself." The tears and grief of those whom He so dearly loved powerfully acted on His sympathy and mightily stirred His emotions. What a vivid and beautiful outcoming of His real humanity. O, my brother—sister, Jesus is the same loving, sympathizing Saviour to-day that He was eighteen hundred years ago. O, wife—mother, Jesus is moved in behalf of your loved ones, "dead in trespasses and sins," more than you are. His nature is deeper and purer, and He sees their peril as you cannot.

Go to Him in your solicitude. Dwell in His Holy presence, until, you too, catch the powerful inspiration of His faith, and are girded with His resurrecting power. Christian solicitude brings Christ to the grave of the dead. Jesus asked, "Where have ye laid him?" They said unto Him, "Come and see!" On the way to the tomb "Jesus wept!" He wept, not so much because the hearts of the friends of the dead were broken

and bleeding, but because there was a cause for weeping, which lay *back* of the death of Lazarus — *sin* ! “ For by *sin* came death.” My brother—sister, when you and I shall have done all possible to save our lost loved ones, Christ and they will do the rest. Martha’s faith wavers, and she interposes an objection, and gently remonstrates against the exposure of the decomposing remains of her brother, to the eyes of Him who had so loved him. “ The hope she had indulged, suffered a momentary eclipse on the proposal to expose the sightless corpse.” How patiently and lovingly the Master bears with the doubts of His pupils ! Jesus gently rebukes her wavering faith : “ Said I not unto thee, that *if* thou wouldst *believe*, thou shouldst see the glory of God ?” Why should the restoration to life of a decomposing corpse seem hopeless in the presence of “ the Resurrection and the Life ?” Why should the salvation of your friend, seem hopeless when Christ, the “ Mighty to save,” stands ready to speak life into the dead ? Martha’s faith is confirmed and ready for action. “ Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.” Lazarus would have lain there till this moment, had not faith been exercised and *acted*. Faith and works must go hand in hand. Christ’s prayer and Martha’s faith, availed in behalf of the dead. Resurrecting power is always present. Faith is the hand that lifts the flood-gates, and lets saving power upon the people. “ Jesus lifted up His eyes and said : Father I thank Thee, that Thou hast heard Me.” Miracle working power was given in answer to Christ’s prayer, *days* before.

"Thou *hast* heard Me." It was an accomplished fact. All that were necessary, that Lazarus might be resurrected, were the development of Martha's faith, and the actual expenditure of resurrecting power. Faith has done its part, and now the all commanding voice of Him who is the "Resurrection and the Life," pierces the veil that partitions the seen from the unseen, falls on the ear of Lazarus and summons him back to his old home in the flesh. "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth!" Powerful emblem of that voice that, bye-and-bye, will summon the dead of the centuries to judgment! The disembodied spirit obeyed the Almighty's call, returned, and impregnated the "stiff, dead corpse; the decay and odor of death departed, and at the word, 'come forth,' the living, healthy man, came forth, in his grave clothes, tottering to the entrance of his tomb." What a moment of solemn silence!! What a thrill of holy joy for the weeping sisters!! Almost too good to be believed when seen! What a thrill of joy courses the avenues of the soul, of the believer, as he sees the subject of his prayers coming into life! The inner man quivers with rapturous joy! Martha's faith for the resurrection of her brother, had its beginning, its development, and culmination. So it is with every believer's faith. The faith of Christ vivified, encouraged, and assisted to increase Martha's faith.

#### DELINEATION OF YOUR FAITH AND MINE.

This is a picture of what actually takes place in the growth and perfecting of the faith of every child of God, illustrating the Divine and human

in the *development* of faith. Martha's doubt, or want of faith, oscillated her between hope and fear. Then doubt began to weaken and faith began to strengthen in the presence of Christ's all-truthful word, all masterful faith, and almighty power. Just so with you and with me to-day, as we talk with Christ in prayer, and He talks with us by His Spirit in the Word; your faith and my faith are quickened and encouraged by Christ's unbounded faith, through the agency of the Holy Ghost. "Like produces like," is an inflexible law of God in the realms of both the material and spiritual. Love begets love, joy begets joy, peace begets peace, long suffering begets long suffering, gentleness begets gentleness, meekness begets meekness, and faith begets faith. "We love Him because He first loved us," and "shed abroad his love into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

#### ILLUSTRATION OF THE INCREASE OF FAITH.

The development of faith—power and endowment of the faith-faculty, may be illustrated by the development and increase of the physical power of Louis Cyr, the Canadian Samson, who lifted from a platform, with his back, 3,536 pounds of pig-iron. This marvelous physical power of the giant was developed from that of the infant by the wise and vigorous use of what he had. So, by the wise and vigorous use of the grace of faith—given when the penitent soul trusts and is saved, we may become moral giants. Cyr reached this great physical strength during many years of growth and use of his strength. So, Christians reach their greatest spiritual power only after

years of Christ-like character development, by the most faithful use of the means of grace—the discharge of all Christian duties, and the improvement of all Christian privileges. It is impossible for the babe in Christ to prevail with God in prayer for as great victories as the father or mother in Israel may. The child Cyr of ten years could have taken hold of 3,536 pounds of iron just as the man Cyr did at forty, but he had not the strength to lift one-thirty-fifth of the 3,536 pounds. The babe in Christ may prevail to-morrow for what he cannot prevail to-day, because his faith-power may be greater to-morrow than it *can* be to-day. Yet there is something wonderful in the power of the constantly accumulating prayers of even a babe in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION OF A MATURED FAITH.

“The Annual Conference had just closed with the usual reading of the appointments. It was late in the evening. A large company crowded the vestibule as the ministers pressed their way out of the church; some to make final preparations for their departure from the seat of Conference; others hastening to meet the trains that would bear them home.

Waiting in the vestibule, to accompany her husband, was the wife of one whose new place of labor had just been announced. The following remarks were made to her by an intimate friend standing near, uttered in a sympathetic tone of voice, and with an excited manner: ‘It is too bad; how could the Conference treat your husband so: he is deserving better things; you ought not to go.’

The reply was made with that singular calmness that always reveals depth of Christian trust. It was this: 'We have committed ourselves fully to God. We *know* he will overrule all. We accept life just as he permits it to come to us. He has said, 'All things work together for good to them that love God' We *believe* just what He has said. It is not for us to choose our way; we *may* innocently have a preference, but our human wish might conflict with His choice. We wish above all things to be in harmony with Him. We have learned to interpret His choice by the providential opportunities which He opens before us daily. If these opportunities seem to human view, insignificant and limited, we ought not to decide that they are so really, for we are not in a position to measure them as God does. We have one thing absolutely true: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. It may seem strange to you, dear friend, that we should be quiet under these trying circumstances, but it ought not thus to seem to you. We dare trust our heavenly Father with an implicit confidence in *all things*. Every step of life thus far has shown how tender and faithful God is under all circumstances. We will go to our new appointment gladly, not because it is what we might have chosen, but because He has engaged never to leave nor forsake us.'

A Christian lady was standing near, and overheard these words. She had not yet come to know the reality of practical faith. She said to herself, 'I will follow this minister and wife,

and see how they will endure the test. Will they firmly endure? If they do I may possibly find that rest which I have so long needed.'

The year glided swiftly away; a year of increasing influence, a year of gracious revival in the church. Every department was prosperous. The affection of a grateful people was boundless. All through the year, indeed, the tests of their faith were many. But their profession was so genuine, so manifest their steady faith, that the stoutest unbeliever was silent, and the number in the church who sought the perfect rest of faith was greatly multiplied.

Years afterward came a joyful testimony. The lady who stood in that vestibule, and who heard such words of practical faith from the lips of the minister's wife, was brought, through these words, to know her full privilege in Christ. She came to her one day and said, 'Do you remember that evening at the close of Conference? Well, the reply you made then to one who offered her sympathy convinced me that *you* had something that I had not. I then resolved to watch your course, and if you endured such tests as I knew were sure to be before you, I would never rest until I found the same experience. I saw your unwavering faith, and witnessed the result upon others. I was led to seek the same. I have found this rest. Your testimony that evening, unconsciously to you, was the means of bringing me into the same Beulah land; and there I have been through all the vicissitudes of these intervening years.'"

O, TO LEARN THE LESSON OF PERFECT FAITH!

"It would seem as if, when this lesson is fully learned, the soul must be ready for entrance with highest honor to the company of the just made perfect. The ability to plan a campaign and keep his designs absolutely secret is conceded to be one of the chief characteristics of a great general. It is said of the Duke of Wellington that in the conduct of the peninsula war, upon which his fame largely rests, he was constantly criticised and misunderstood. He could only have vindicated himself by disclosing his plans, and to disclose them would have been to frustrate them. He even had to accept the general appearance of a beaten commander, retiring step by step before the enemy, allowing him to believe that he was being driven from the country, while in actual fact he was fighting ever victoriously.

"With breadth and foresight, with a marvelous grasp of details and a sure eye for opportunities, with swift and unerring judgment and unexampled patience, he awaiteth his own time, turned the tables finally upon his opponents, and drove them from the field."

We commend the wise and successful general, but we question the same policy in the Supreme Ruler. We say, or are tempted to say, "If I had control of affairs I would not let them be thus; why does God permit it?"

"He hides Himself so wondrously,  
As though there were no God;  
He is least seen when all the powers  
Of ill are most abroad.



Or He deserts us at the hour  
The fight is all but lost;  
And seems to leave us to ourselves  
Just when we need Him most."

Why? "To the intent ye may believe."

HOW MAY MY FAITH BECOME PERFECT?

The increasing and perfecting of faith is the work of both God and man. The Divine and human cannot be separated in this matter. Faith is said to be the "fruit of the Spirit," and yet it is man's, and for its possession, measure, and act, man is responsible. While it is true that the perfecting of faith is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, yet it is equally true that, "by works (of the believer) is faith made perfect." God gives the *grace* of faith, or power to believe, and man, God helping him, increases his faith by using what he has, that is, receives an increase of grace to believe more fully, as he faithfully uses what he has already received. Perfect faith is not "a *state* wrought in us by the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Faith is not a *state* any more than love, or peace, or joy is a state. The Scriptures nowhere mention saving faith as a *state*. It is a fruit of the Spirit in the same sense that repentance is a fruit of the Spirit. Faith "inwrought in us by the baptism of the Holy Ghost?" Pray, on what condition? The baptism of the Holy Ghost is given in *answer* to the prayer of *faith*. Then the *possession* and *act* of faith invariably precede, and are the *conditions* of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Hence, faith as an *act* cannot *follow* the baptism of the Spirit; though in the baptism of the Spirit is given more of the *grace* of faith.

The *grace* of faith is not *faith*. The *grace* of faith and *natural* faith *united* and *blended* become saving, sanctifying, or empowering faith. In all faith, except the gift of faith, the Divine and human unite and blend. The *grace* of faith may be "definitely sought and received," as any other grace may be sought and received, but not *faith itself*. The grace of saving faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, which He inworks into our natural faith as we at the same moment work out, not the faith of the Holy Spirit, but *our* faith toward and in God. As God works *in* man "to will and to do of His good pleasure," so at the same time *man* works *out* his own salvation by the enabling grace of God. The Scriptures invariably imply that the faith of believers is their *own*, except the gift of faith, and hold us responsible for its possession and act. Hence, if the prayer of the apostles; "Lord increase our faith," is correct, it must be understood that they were asking for the *grace* of faith; or what is probable, they did not know enough about the subject of saving faith at this time to really understand what they were saying. This prayer of the apostles was made *before* Christ "opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures," and before they had received that "anointing" which "teacheth you of all things."

Now you may repeat your question: How may I attain to the possession and use of the greatest measure of faith possible? First, you must submit yourself to God's will *perfectly*. Again, use what faith you have as constantly and vigorously as possible. A life of prayer is the

only soil in which faith will grow, and continue strong. As you increase your faith, act it in works. "By works is faith made perfect." Overcoming trials, difficulties, obstacles, etc., is the method by which faith is increased and perfected. The question is, are we willing to go into the *furnace*, that we *may* have a faith that will "*quench the violence of fire?*" Our Father permits burdens to come upon us: nay, with His own loving hands He rolls them upon us, that we, in rolling them back on Him, may become strong in faith. Thus the Lord puts us through spiritual gymnastics, that He may bring out in acts of faith, and other works, the grace that He has put in us.

## PRAYER AND FASTING.

Prayer must be accompanied by fasting, in some cases, that faith may reach its greatest possible strength.

## HOW TO BEGIN.

Muller says: "Begin in a little way at first. I was able to trust the Lord for ten cents, then for ten dollars, then for a hundred dollars, then for one hundred thousand dollars, and now with the greatest ease I could trust Him for millions, if there was occasion. But, first, I should quietly, carefully, deliberately examine and see whether what I was trusting for was something in accordance with His promise in His written Word. If I found it was, the amount of difficulties would be no hindrance to my trust. *Fifty-one years, and God has never failed me!*"

## FAITH MAY ALWAYS INCREASE.

Perfection of faith does not imply that our faith may not be increased. Perfection of faith

means that it so possesses the heart as to exclude all doubt of the fulfillment of God's Word, whatever the circumstances. After this faith has mastered all doubt, it may increase with rapidity, just as love to God and man, having become perfect, and having mastered all that is contrary to love, it may increase with great rapidity forever.

#### THE MEASURE OF THE GRACE OF FAITH.

The degree of our apprehension of the obligations upon us to God and man, and the completeness of our surrender to them, is the measure of the grace of faith *bestowed*. The degree of the Holy Spirit possessed is the measure of the grace of faith used. The grace of faith won't believe itself. It is ours to use it in prayer.

#### POWER AND FAITH.

Power to accomplish what is promised always accompanies faith for what is promised, and is in proportion to our faith.

#### KNOWLEDGE OF PRAYER IMPORTANT.

He who has the largest knowledge of the subject of prayer can believe for the greatest blessing, with the greatest ease and certainty. "Lord, teach us (how) to pray."

#### COMPASS OF FAITH'S VISION.

Only they who, with Stephen, are "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," are permitted with him to "behold the glory of God, and Jesus, standing on the right hand of God."

#### EQUAL, YET NOT EQUAL.

The faith-power of two or more persons is not equally developed, along all lines of Christian activity. The faith of the evangelist is stronger for the salvation of souls than for anything else,

because God has called him to do that work, specifically, and he has believed along that line as a specialist. Muller's faith is strongest when asking God for money to feed and clothe hungry orphans. Doctor Cullis' faith is stronger for physical healing of the sick and infirm than for anything else. The physical power of the blacksmith's arm and that of the oarsman may be equal, but that of the blacksmith will achieve far greater results at the *anvil* than that of the oarsman: *i. e.*, faith is most effective along the lines of its *habitual* operations.

UNBELIEF, OR WANT OF FAITH? WHICH?

Is a failure to secure an answer to prayer at a given moment, evidence of unbelief? Not necessarily. It takes time, more or less, for even a perfect faith to do its work; just as it takes time for a mechanic to do a piece of work. The believer may rightfully say at the beginning, because of the realization, a hundred times repeated, of the faithfulness of God: "I know that if I meet the conditions required of me, as I may, my prayer will be answered." He has no more doubt at the beginning than at the moment he takes the answer, yet at the beginning he could not obtain the answer at once for the *specific object* asked for. To illustrate: Here is a moral hero who has conquered in every one of a thousand successive battles; whose faith is so perfect that he hails with joyful anticipation, at the beginning of every battle, the victory that is certain to crown his effort. He is full of holy confidence. Never for a moment questions the possibility or the certain realization of an answer

to his prayer, yet, in a given instance, he prays for days, weeks and months before faith secures an answer for the specific object asked in prayer. All that is necessary to reach the desired object of faith is to put into practice—to use his faith by prayer and works until the object is realized.

DISTINCT OBJECTS OF FAITH REQUIRE SEPARATE  
EFFORTS OF FAITH.

The use of faith, or its practice for a specific object, is of avail for that one object, and that only. Hence every new, successive object of prayer requires a new effort of faith, and more or less continuous. A Christian prays for the salvation of a certain sinner. After an hour, a day, a week, or a month's praying, according to his fervency, faith does its work for that result, and he has "the full assurance of faith." And the lost is, or will be, saved. Now, he desires the salvation of another sinner; the work of faith for the first will not avail for the second (although victory for the first inspires the petitioner with a holy confidence that he may have what he will again and again, so that, having learned the way to victory, it is easier to gain each successive victory); I say the work of faith for the first will not avail for the second. He must begin where he began in the first instance, and put forth a greater or less effort before faith shall have done its work. So it is, respecting a revival in one place, then in another. Each successive revival requires a distinct effort at a throne of grace—a distinct work of faith.

FAITH MAY BE GENUINE THOUGH IMPERFECT.

"The infirm woman doubts, yet she believes;

cross currents of emotion agitate her soul. She is afraid, yet emboldened by her very despair. As to our faith, its ideal perfection would be that it should be unbroken—undashed by any speck of doubt, but the reality is far different. It is no full-orbed completeness, but at the best a growing segment of reflected light, with many a rough place in its jagged outline; prophetic of increase, with many a deep pit of blackness on its silver surface, with many a storm-cloud sweeping across its face, conscious of eclipse, and subject to change; and yet it is the light which He has set to rule the night of life, and we may rejoice in its crescent beam. We are often tempted to question the reality of faith, in ourselves and others, by reason of the unbelief and disbelief which exist with it. But why should we do so? May there not be an inner heart and center of true trust, with a nebulous environment of doubt, through which the nucleus shall gradually send its attracting and consolidating power, and turn it to firm substance? May there not be a germ infinitesimal, yet with a real life throbbing in its microscopic minuteness, and destined to be a great tree, with all of the fowls of the air lodging in its branches? May there not be hid in a heart, a principle of action which is obviously marked out for supremacy, though it has not yet come to sovereign power and manifestation in either the inward or outward being? Where do we learn that faith must be complete to be genuine? Our own weak hearts say it to us often enough, and our lingering unbelief is only too ready to hiss into our ear the serpent's whisper, 'You are deceiving yourself.

Look at your doubts, your coldness, your forgetfulness. You have no faith at all.' To all such morbid thoughts, which only sap the strength of the spirit, and come from beneath, and not from above, we have a right to oppose the first great lesson of this story (of the infirm woman) of the *reality* of an *imperfect* faith. The old prayer is never offered in vain when offered, as at first, with tears—'Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief!'

FAITH THE MEASURE OF GRACE RECEIVED.

"On the one hand, His (Christ's) grace is infinite, and is given to every one of us 'according to the measure of the gift of Christ,' with no limitation but His own unlimited fulness. On the other hand, the amount which we receive from that inexhaustible store is at each successive moment determined by the measure, purity and intensity of our faith. On His part there is no limit but infinity. On our side, the limit is our capacity, and our capacity is settled by our desires. His word to us ever is: 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;' and 'be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'"—*Alex. McLaren*.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Weakness of faith is an evidence of infancy in Christ, or unfaithfulness in His service. "Everything in the kingdom of darkness, and the kingdom of light must bow to the power of faith.

In the spiritual world failure has but one (root) cause; that is the want of faith. Faith is the one condition on which all Divine power comes into man, and works through him."



## “ HAVE FAITH IN GOD ”

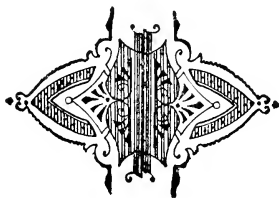
“ Have faith in God, for He who reigns on high  
Hath borne thy grief, and hears the suppliant's sigh ;  
Still to His arms, thine only refuge, fly.  
Have faith in God !

“ Fear not to call on Him, O soul distressed !  
Thy sorrow's whisper woos thee to His breast ;  
He who is oftenest there is oftenest blest.  
Have faith in God !

“ Lean not on Egypt's reeds ; slake not thy thirst  
At earthly cisterns. Seek the kingdom first.  
Though man and Satan fright thee with their worst,  
Have faith in God !

“ Go, tell Him all ! The sigh thy bosom heaves  
Is heard in heaven Strength and praise He gives  
Who gave Himself for thee. Our Jesus lives :  
Have faith in God !

—*Anna Shipton.*



## LECTURE X.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FAITH ; OR, THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.*

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God *through faith*, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time ; wherein we greatly rejoice, though now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (why ?) ; that the *trial of your faith* being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be *tried with fire*, might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye *see* Him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” (1 Pet. 1:3-9.)

#### TRIAL OF FAITH.

“We are always thankful for roses, but seldom for thorns. Frequently the thorns are the better for us. Trials are blessings. Tears make rainbows. Paul winced under the thorn in the flesh, but finally saw the grace in it. So imperfect are

we, and in such a disordered world, that there is much call for discipline. At the first impulse we are often certain we are right on almost all questions which come to us; but maturer thoughts, wider experiences, and instructive years are sure to show us that mistakes in judgment, experience, conduct, and other ways are certain to occur. Our probation has in it more than time; it has corrective and instructive elements. In it is our development. Lessons of trust need to be learned in order to make succeeding years fruitful and calm.

How shall it be done? God sends the trial of our faith. It will do us good."—*Rev. M. V. B. Knox.*

#### CERTAINTY OF FAITH'S TRIAL.

We are so environed by the material—the sensuous, which so constantly claims our attention, that the unseen—the spiritual, is likely to be largely out of mind. This being a fact, and at the same time our spiritual and eternal interests demanding our most earnest attention, necessitate an almost continuous battle with our legion visible foe. We are so accustomed to being influenced and controlled by the bodily senses, that to “walk by faith” in all things necessary is often a great trial of our faith, and the only way to rise above these trials is to walk solely by faith. Therefore let us “fight the good fight of faith,” that we may “lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou (we) art also called.” It was through the trial and triumph of their faith that the moral giants of olden time “subdued kingdoms, etc.” The enemies of faith are both

*subjective* and *objective*. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—foes that "war against the soul," that they may regain their lost dominion, must be kept under foot, or, what is better, "the old man with his deeds" must be "put off," and "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him that created him," must be "put on." The objective warfare and trial of faith consist in "pulling down the strongholds of the devil" and the capture of his allies. This is our special "high calling" as faithful soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### MYSTERIES OF FAITH'S TRIAL.

"The life of faith has other trials besides those which spring from the cross of duty. It is generally easy to distinguish the right path from the wrong, but there are hours when the Divine dealings are dark, and when it is ours to trust God even in darkness. 'What I do ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter,' is frequently the only word of comfort we can grasp, and our duty then is to wait for light.

The relationship in which God stands to humanity as its Ruler and Guide, and His actings as a father toward the children whom He would educate, might lead us to expect that there would be many things done by Him which we fail to understand at the time. The general who has planned the campaign fully comprehends the bearing of the different moves by which he has determined to gain a certain advantage. To the master-mind the marches and counter-marches, the advances and the retreats are all necessary

for the purpose in view. But they may for a while prove inexplicable to the common soldier. He does not rebel on that account. He is content to be ignorant, because he has confidence in his commander. In like manner, when we think of God as having His great design, which is being wrought out in the history of the Church, it should not appear strange that there should occur periods and incidents that, for a while, confound our own expectations. And if we are children, also, of the great Father, we need not wonder if, in His training, many things have to be determined for us in spite of our own wishes, and of the value of which we may remain long in ignorance.

The life of Abraham was made up of a series of mysterious commands. The loss of Joseph and the taking away of Benjamin were, for many a day, dark as midnight to Jacob. The death and burial of Christ formed a disappointment which almost shattered the faith of His disciples. 'We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; and to-day is the third day since these things were done.' Martha and Mary were plunged in greater sorrow from the apparent neglect of Jesus than from the loss of their brother."

The methods, ways, and means by which faith is most severely tried are hidden from us. If we could know how, or by what means God would answer our prayers, for others, for instance, how easy it would be to believe! But it is the province of faith to carry us *beyond perception*. We look in vain for the *how*.

“Similar experiences occur in life now. There are some, on whom stroke follows stroke, and from whose heart the burden of grief, disappointment, and care is never for a moment lightened. It seems hard that while others enjoy summer brightness, their sky is always curtained with gloom; while others have health, they have pain and weakness; while others prosper, yet, struggle as they may, adversity is their inevitable doom. So have we seen happy homes strangely visited by sorrows so very hard as to have been the last we would have expected from the hand of a loving Father. The one who could the least be spared, suddenly struck down, and with him the stay of the innocent and the helpless, shattered; the mother torn from the clinging arms of the child; or the infant, who had been as a light from heaven in the home, snatched away in its spotless beauty, and the music that was sweetest in life silenced forever! Verily, what the Lord does at such times ‘we know not now.’ It is all dark—utterly dark; and all that the faithful heart can do is to lift the eye from the mysteries of earth to that Presence where all is light, where all is known, and to wait patiently on the Lord.”—*Rev. M. V. B. Knox.*

#### NATURE OF FAITH'S TRIALS.

Allowing the mind to think of and dwell upon our feeling, or want of feeling, when praying for ourselves; or, allowing ourselves to think of the wickedness and stubbornness of the ungodly, when praying for them, is the great hindrance in the way of the exercise of faith. If we can but shut ourselves up with God, and dwell, in thought,

on His infinite love, benevolence, power and *veracity*, as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, we cannot but be inspired with holy confidence, and repose absolute confidence in Him, who asks every trusting soul: "*Is there anything too hard for Me?*"

#### WAYS AND MEANS OF FAITH'S TRIAL.

"One way God does is by allowing opposition to come to us. Jacob, at the brook Jabbok, gained the blessing after an all-night struggle. The sailor must have some head winds, some storms, some nights of dark uncertainty, to bring out all the forces and resources in him. The Christian by overcoming personal, social, doctrinal or other kinds of opposition grows stronger, wiser, purer. Every point of vantage gained means mounting upward toward the mind that was in Christ and toward heaven.

Another means Heaven has of trying our faith for our good is by laying responsibilities on us. Many a Sunday School superintendent and teacher; many a young man consenting to preach, and young woman to go as missionary, have found wonderful enlargement in doing duty. It was hard, but blessed. In the little duties that seem irksome there is often a purpose of the Lord to bring us into ways of perfect trust and confidence. Every trial of faith, whether by opposition, responsibilities, duties, temptations permitted, is one of God's ways of making the most of us. Christ was made perfect through suffering, and we may rejoice that in trials the heavenly Father has such beneficent purposes toward us.

To make man like Christ is the eagerness of Heaven."—*Rev. M. V. B. Knox.*

#### REASONS FOR FAITH'S TRIALS.

(1.) There is a necessity growing out of the *nature* of faith. Faith commits itself on the testimony of another—testimony to realities invisible and future, which cannot be perceived; cannot be demonstrated; cannot be apprehended but by faith. Thus faith going beyond the senses, beyond perception, *stark alone*—reason having pointed the way, steps out into the beyond on the bare testimony of another, when to the senses and perception there seem insurmountable difficulties in its way. (2.) The trial of faith is a necessity because no grace or faculty is strengthened and perfected except by *trial*. Even "the Captain of our salvation" was made "perfect through suffering"—trial; perfect in the graces of His character. In the garden He most earnestly prayed that the cup might pass from Him if it could be possible, yet, said He: "Not My will but Thine." At that moment was He "made perfect." How the faith of Columbus strengthened as obstacles increased and towered in his pathway! How the faith of Paul and others strengthened by *trial*! "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, etc.," and *faith too*. The "first glad faith of the soul is not strong. Struggles and temptations must oppress it, but they may mature it. They purge its eye until it sees the dawn of coming day and victory, and becomes conscious of the presence of the unseen Almighty One by its side." Faith surrounded, as it is, by the powers



of the visible must *resist them or perish!* Its resistance gives its force. Therefore, faith *must be tried* that it may be *strong*. Abraham's faith is an example. "He went out not knowing whither he went," yet "he staggered not at the promise of God." Just when we seem most to need Divine manifestations, then it seems not only that "God has forgotten to be gracious," but the powers of darkness seem to be menacingly triumphing, and we cry with David: "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord; forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" The oft-tried soldier of the cross knows what this means—that when all things—even God Himself *seems* to fail us—all perceptible and conscious support has utterly given away and nothing is left us—*absolutely nothing* but the lone, naked promise, we sink into conscious weakness and utter helplessness! Why? That *His strength* may be made perfect in *our weakness*. When in the furnace, faith is severely tried and thoroughly purified, then appears "the form of the Fourth \* \* like the Son of God." Spiritual greatness is the child of a thoroughly tried and fully developed faith. While Christ remained *visibly* present with His disciples, they remained *materialistic and selfish*; but when they had to "walk by faith and not by sight," how spiritual, holy, and powerful they became!

#### TRIAL OF A YOUNG CHRISTIAN'S FAITH.

A man, who, at his conversion had a very joyful experience, but his faith being tested he got into gloom, and came to the minister inquiring: "Has God forsaken me?" "Did you ever

pass through a tunnel," asked the minister. "Certainly I have," replied the man. "But I don't see what that has to do with it." "When you were in the tunnel did you think the sun had been blotted out, and existed no longer?" "No, of course I did not; I knew the sun was in the sky, just the same, although I could not see it just then. But what has that to do with my experience?" "Were you very much *distressed* while you were going through the dark tunnel?" "No, I was not. I knew I should get out again into the light." "And did you get out?" "I *am out now!*" exclaimed the man joyfully! "I see what you mean! The *facts* are just the same, no matter how I *feel*, and I am to rejoice in the *facts* and not in my *feelings*. I see! I see!"

#### TRIAL OF LUTHER'S FAITH.

"On the morning of the second day that he was to make his appearance before the Diet of Worms, Luther's soul was filled with a horror of great darkness. He was haunted with the fear that he should wreck the cause entrusted to him, and give the enemies of Christ occasion to triumph. As we bend our ear at his closet door, we hear him closing his prayer: "O, God! My God! hearest Thou me not? My God! art Thou dead? No, Thou canst not die! Thou hidest Thyself only! Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it well! Act then, O, God! Stand at my side for the sake of Thy well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield and my strong tower! Lord, where stayest Thou? O, my God! Where art Thou? Come, come, I am ready to lay down my life for Thy truth!"

Thy Word is my assurance ! My soul belongs to Thee ! It shall abide forever with Thee. O, God help me ! Amen !”

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE WORD.

In Mark (9:14-29), we are furnished with a very apt illustration of the trial and triumph of faith. While Christ, with Peter, James and John, were on the mount of transfiguration, a father whose son was possessed of a dumb spirit, had brought his son to where he supposed Christ was, but not finding Him, he doubtless acquainted the apostles, who had been left behind, with his errand, and we have reason to think that they, upon finding the man disappointed in not finding the Master, said to him : “We can cast the devil out of your child, bring him unto us.” They made the attempt, but failed. The enemies of Christ were looking on, and saw the defeat and gathered about the discomfited disciples, and were disputing with them ; doubtless claiming that their Master was a deceiver. Whereupon the blessed Lord, with the three, made His appearance, and “asked the Scribes : What question ye with them ? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit \* \* and I spake to Thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not. \* \* If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Jesus said unto him : If thou canst believe ; all things are possible unto him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said, with tears, Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief !” Christ, the great

Deliverer, commanded: "Bring him unto Me." Upon the failure of the disciples to cast out the evil spirit, the father's faith received a stunning blow; but in the presence of the Master Himself, hope revived, and "They brought him unto Him."

The "if," of unbelief, had gotten into the father's heart. "*If* Thou canst do anything, etc." Brethren, did this little "if," of unbelief, ever get into your hearts and trouble you? How many times the prayer—"If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us," has gone up for —————! Effort after effort has been made, and as often proved a total or comparative failure. O, if Christians would exercise their *faith* half as much as they do their unbelief what displays of saving power would be witnessed! Faith must be exercised until such a view of God's willingness and almightiness to save is obtained as will fill the believer with holy triumph.

"*If* thou canst *believe!*" Unbelief seeks to throw the responsibility on Christ: "If *Thou* canst do anything." But the Master throws the responsibility back on the *doubter*: "If *thou* canst *believe!*"

"All things are possible to him that believeth." An all-conquering faith appropriates all conquering power. All things that are possible for God to give, within the conditions of the gospel, are possible for us to receive, by faith. If it is possible for God to save that unsaved one, for whom you are praying, it is possible for you, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to believe that He will!

"Help my unbelief!" How appropriate this prayer. Help me with pardon of my unbelief, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Unbelief gives God the lie. Only Christ, my brethren, can cast out this doubt devil. The weakness of our faith is the measure of our want of light, or of our disobedience, or both. "Fill out the deficiency of my faith!" Faith reveals unbelief. Each grace reveals its opposite. This father had a measure of faith, but not sufficient. Your prayer, my brethren, reveals that you have a measure of faith, or you would not pray at all. Faith is the all-animating principle of the soul. The soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, "full of faith and power," courts the onslaught of the enemy, rejoices at the rattle of his musketry and the roar of his artillery; and, in holy assurance, engages the foe.

"Lord, I believe!" Victory! Faith downed unbelief and got it under! Is this the triumphant shout of your trusting heart? "Lord, I believe?" For *what* do you believe? For all that it is possible for God to do in——?

"Come out of him." O, with what infinite ease redeeming power triumphed over the demoniac spirit; with what ease the Holy Spirit overcomes the resistance of the sinner, when the faith necessary is exercised. Shall we hear the voice of the Redeemer, in answer to prayer, saying to sin in one after another of our unsaved friends: "Come out of him?"

The unbelief of the parent stood between Christ and the deliverance of his child, just as it does to-day. Do not understand me to say, that

the want of faith by the Church is the only thing in the way of the salvation of sinners in —. Nay! the sinner's own hands are crimson with his own blood; but without the faith of Christians, the sinner will forever *remain* "dead in trespasses and sin."

"If thou canst believe," I will save. Will we take the Master at His word? How many will join our hearts, our faith and our works for victory, regardless of what may be in the way?

"This faith in the dark  
Pursuing its mark,  
Through many sharp trials of love;  
Is the sorrowful waste  
That is to be passed  
In the way to the Canaan above."

—*Madam Guyon.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.

Mr. Finney tells of a person he knew ("Father Nash") who kept a list of the names of the persons for whom he prayed. "I have had the opportunity to know a multitude of persons, for whom he became interested, who were immediately converted." At Evans' Mills, in the State of New York, a man kept a low tavern, who was a terror to Christian people. "Father Nash," said Mr. Finney, "heard of this man and put his name on his praying list. His gift of prayer was wonderful, and his faith almost miraculous. Not many days after," said Mr. Finney, "we were holding an evening meeting with a very crowded house. Who should come in but this notorious Mr. D.? People feared he had come to make a disturbance, and some got up and retired. But Father Nash's prayers had been

answered. He writhed upon his seat, and soon arose and asked if he might say a few words. He made a most humble and comprehensive confession, and was converted." This kind of praying will bring the stoutest rebels to their knees, and into the dust before God. I repeat *this* kind of praying. The want of this kind of praying stands in the way of the world's speedy Christianization!

"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES."

Homeward bound, in the darkness of the night; "I cannot see our house, papa," said a little girl, anxiously. "I don't know the way; where are we going?" (Trial of faith.) Her papa replied: "I can see the way, *and if you keep hold of my hand*, I will take care of you." (Assuring declaration and promise.) Then gripping her papa's hand a little tighter, as she trudged on where he led, she confidently said: "Yes, *you* know the way, don't you, papa? You will take care of your little girl, because you *love* her; won't you, papa? (Triumph of faith). O, my brother—my sister, you are the little child, in the darkness of this world. God is your Father, hand in hand, leading you to "the home over there." Amid the darkness, *trust and triumph!*

By far the severest trial and most illustrious triumph of faith, to be found on the page of history, are recorded of Abraham's faith, in Genesis, twenty-second chapter. It is stated that "God did tempt Abraham." He did not incite Abraham to sin, but *tested* his trueness to Himself, the One, to whom *supreme* devotion is due. God gave

Abraham *occasion* for the manifestation of his unswerving devotion to Himself, and for the development of his faith; that both might stand, in bold relief, before the eyes of the coming generations of men, as an example of supreme affection for, and unstaggering faith in God. "Take now *thy* son, thine *only* son—*Isaac*, whom thou *lovest*, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering." Every feature in the case was calculated to give a deeper stab to the loving heart of the father. His *only* son—the son of *promise*, must die, and that by his loving *father's* hand! Who can imagine the tempest of emotion pent up in that father's heart? Yet he "conferred not with flesh and blood," but "rose up early in the morning and took Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told." During the two days journey he had this painful secret shut up in his heart. Think you that it would not have been far easier for Abraham to have gladly given himself, as a burnt offering, than his dearly beloved son? The lone father and son arrived at the place where the test was to reach its culminating severity. O, that question from the lips—perhaps from the *heart* of Isaac! What father, but Abraham, would not have reeled and fallen under the terrific blow! "*My father* \* \* behold the fire and the wood! But *where* is the *lamb*? Is the father stricken dumb? Listen! "*My son, God will provide Himself a lamb!*" Surely the father's heart must have been in his throat, as he tremulously answered that question,



and turned away his face that the unbidden tears might fall unnoticed by the unsuspecting son. Abraham built the altar and laid upon it the wood. But for the full consciousness that he was acting in obedience to God's will the effort would have been too great a strain for human endurance. The supreme moment has come. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." It was enough! His devotion was absolute! His faith was all-masterful! "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham! \* \* lay not thine hand upon the lad \* \* for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine *only* son from Me."

## POWER OF FAITH.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed \* \* nothing shall be impossible unto you." Why? Because faith is the condition that invests you with omnipotence to do God's will. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you," is *literally* true regarding anything agreeable to God's will, because, on the condition of faith, God has pledged His almighty power to operate *in* us, and *through* us, in the accomplishment of His *perfect* will *in* us and *through* us. This power of faith is the saving power of God, in the *grace* of faith. The marvelous results that follow the act of faith are wrought by the operations of faith. "Thy *faith* hath saved thee." "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*." "Faith dares believe all that God has revealed

and hope for all that God has promised! She reads on that manger, on that cross, on that rocky sepulchre, these glorious words: 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, *how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*' And there, lifting an eagle eye to heaven, she rises to the boldest flights, and soars aloft on the broad wings of prayer."—*Guthrie*. In order to mighty, and unexampled revivals, what we especially need is, that the whole Church go down on our knees, and on our faces before God.

#### CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

Brethren, where does the responsibility, as to the salvation of the lost — of this community rest? Not on Him who "gave His life a ransom for all." Not all on the unsaved themselves. How many of these church members can stand up here, and before the eyes of this company, hold up their hands and say: "My hands are clean of the blood of all men in this community?" Until we shall have exercised all possible faith for the salvation of the unsaved, there is still a fearful responsibility upon us, as well as upon sinners themselves, and not until we shall have exercised all possible faith, and put forth all other reasonable, possible effort to bring sinners to Christ, should we attempt to excuse ourselves from further effort, by saying "sinners are free agents, etc." Behind this statement, multitudes of culpably delinquent, and faithless church members, take refuge, and let sinners within their reach, slip into hell. The great, thrilling, startling, and overwhelming question is: "Have I put forth all

reasonable, possible effort to rescue the perishing?" This question is not to be decided in the exceedingly dim light of a backslidden state of heart, but in the light of a perfect consecration to God, and a blessed experience of that love that constrained the Father to give His *only* begotten Son, etc."—that love that constrained the Son of God to empty Himself of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that He might make Himself of NO reputation, and as a servant of *all*, took upon His soul the woes of the world, poured out His life unto *death*, for these very sinners about us, and opened up the way to the throne of grace, and the throne of God!! O, brethren! to be Christians is to be Christ-like. To *love* like Christ, in our measure; to *sacrifice* like Christ, and, if need be, to *die* like Christ, that sinners may be saved! "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." This question is to be decided in the light of the value of a human soul, in the light of the blazing glory of an endless heaven, and in the light of the quenchless flames of an endless hell! It is true that sinners *are* free agents and *because* they are free agents *still*—free to choose eternal life and *refuse* eternal death, they may be *saved*! And, until the lost about us are *eternally* saved or *eternally* damned, and while you and I live, your responsibility, and mine, will not cease. And, whether we are sufficiently alive in Christ to realize it or not, it is upon us as the awful weight of worlds!! Alas! Alas! How soon it will *not* be true of the unsaved, of this community, that they will be *free* to choose eternal

life or eternal death ! O, God help us ! Do not forget that the hindrances inherent in sinners are God's to overcome. The battle, the victory, and the glory are His. It is ours to obey and believe to the utmost.

O, for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe !

A faith that shines more bright and clear  
When tempests rage without ;  
That when in danger knows no fear,  
In darkness feels no doubt.

—*Charles Wesley.*



## LECTURE XI.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FAITH; OR, FAITH AND ITS CONCOMITANTS.*

#### FAITH AND REASON.

Faith is not begotten by superstition. It is not opposed to reason. It is a *rational* act, and can be correct, only, when the understanding is enlightened. It is neither blinded by prejudice nor led astray by error. Reason finds its sublimest expression in the act of an intelligent faith. The scientist's faith as to the unknown facts of nature, is no more certainly piloted by reason, based upon known or probable facts, than the Christian's faith, as to unknown spiritual verities, is piloted by reason, based upon known or probable spiritual realities. True faith rests upon *facts*, just as the statue rests upon its pedestal. A thing may be reasonable, and therefore the object of faith, yet not demonstrable. Saving or Christian faith often leads beyond or above the reason of those who make the mistake of looking for a reason in the realm of the *natural*, which can be found only in the realm of the *supernatural*. Faith invariably leads beyond apprehension, either by intuition, the senses, or demonstration. That, is its *distinguishing* feature; but it never leads beyond the *dictates of reason*. How often an after experimental knowledge justifies a foregoing act of faith in God—a faith preceded by a reason, founded in the *nature* of God only.

Reason, illumined by the light of Divine revelation, says: God is, and is just and holy. He commands what I do not now comprehend, but, *believing* "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him," I obey His command, and take Him at His word. "By faith (not by an understanding of the case) Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had *received the promises* offered up his *only* begotten son, of whom it was said: In *Isaac* shall thy seed be called:" (Had he acted on his *knowledge* based upon the *promises* only, he would not have *obeyed or believed* God. Isaac "was the son of *promise*." Did reason dictate: "This will nullify God's promise?" No! But rather, rising above the *natural*, into the *supernatural*, it said: "God is holy and just. It is His business to take care of His promises, and the business of His servant to obey Him and *believe* His promises still.") Accounting (by *reasoning* from what he *knew* of God) that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead (the only thing God could have done and kept His promise, had Isaac's life been taken), from which also he received him in a figure." How marvelously the *reasonable* faith of Abraham was justified, by its perfection and victory! The unbeliever says: "The Christian is a fanatic, believing without, or, *contrary* to reason." But, by-and-by, he experiences (as many skeptics have done) the blessedness of the Christian religion, by a *reasonable* faith, and his experimental knowledge infallibly proves that his act of faith was dictated by the highest reason. The father commands; the

obedient, loving child says: "I can't understand *why*, but father knows, and I will obey and trust him." But he does not obey and trust without a *reason*. The command of God to the children of Israel to "go forward," seemingly, in the face of insurmountable difficulty, seemed to the *ignorant* multitude *unreasonable*; but not to the well-instructed Moses. Moses had such a knowledge of the supernatural that the act of faith, in stretching out his rod over the sea, was not only in *harmony* with his reason, but what his reason *dictated*. For he had learned by experience, through faith, that to obey God was always reasonable, because of *what* God is. The fact is, seldom does faith go as far in religious matters as right reason dictates. Faith is taking God at His word, but finds its reasonable basis in the nature of God. Not necessarily in an *experimental* knowledge of God, at *first*; but a knowledge that comes of reasoning from the *known* to the *unknown*. I find myself under law. Law necessarily supposes a law-giver. That law-giver must be intelligent, hence, personal. I learn *who* the law-giver is from the *nature* of his laws, or, by other manifestations of himself. I find his laws are just and holy, therefore he must be just and holy. Here I find a *basis* for reason, and for a reasonable faith in the realm of the supernatural, as well as in the natural. No Christian believes anything without a reason, and to him a good reason. We are exhorted to be "able to give a reason for the hope that is in us." He knows *why* he believes. Never does he ask or expect anyone to believe without furnishing a reasonable

basis of faith. He says to the penitent sinner (who already assents to the testimony of God in the Gospel): "You may receive pardon because *God* says, in His Word, 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts,' etc." This reason for faith, given by the believer, is accepted as valid, by the penitent, and resting his faith on the truthfulness of God's testimony, as seen by the light of reason, he takes God at His word, and is saved. So every act of a genuine faith is based on the most valid of reasons; nor can faith act without a reason. Hence, underlying all faith is doctrine—formulated truth, or supposed truth—*reason*. Man is a sinner—doctrine. God only can forgive—doctrine. He has declared that He will forgive on condition of faith—doctrine. "Therefore" (for this reason), says the penitent, "I believe God fulfills His promise and saves me." The mind must first be satisfied by investigation, or by some other way that the testimony is rational—is of God. When thus convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, the mind is ready to take another step, *viz.*, to believe—to act, and rest upon the testimony.

Reason is the guide of faith, as in a dark night, one with a lantern, going before a traveler shows him the road, and the dangers to be avoided. Reason investigates, seeks for and weighs evidence, and announces the result to faith! Faith merely receives the report and acts upon it; but, from its special character, makes no independent observations and inquiries. The



responsibility for faith's action, is entirely suspended on the findings and report of reason.

Reason is the foundation of all certainty. It is our security against error. As to religious matters, its chief function is to investigate the credibility of the evidence of that which is proposed to us as a Divine revelation, by proving the evidence competent, or incompetent. When the evidence is found to be competent, then, upon the *authority* of God's Word, the mind, by faith, accepts what the understanding may not grasp, or the reason demonstrate. Yet it is the height of reason to do this very thing. Reason is to judge of the credibility of the testimony as to the divinity of the Scriptures, as a revelation from God, from the evidence but not, directly, of the truthfulness or wisdom of the things revealed. The evidence being competent, the truthfulness and wisdom of the things revealed cannot be rationally doubted, though they be far beyond our comprehension.

But are we to believe things true and from God, that are contradictory to sense and reason? Real, and evident contradiction no sane man can believe; but granted, that the evidence sustaining the Bible, as the Word of God, is competent, there are no real contradictions in the Word of God. There are, to the uninformed, seeming contradictions, and unless we have such an insight into "the mystery of godliness," as to enable us correctly to judge of those things, and prove them false, we have no good ground for rejecting them, and, as R. Watson says: "We only betray our own ignorance and perverseness

in refusing to take God's Word for the truth of things which pass man's understanding. The single question needed to be considered is: whether it be reasonable to believe, upon competent authority, things that we can neither discover ourselves, nor, when discovered, fully and clearly comprehend. The evidence that they came from God, is, to reason itself, as incontrovertible a proof that they are true, as in matters of human science, would be the evidence of sense, or of mathematical demonstration."

Augustine says: "We know what rests upon reason (what reason demonstrates); we believe what rests upon authority." The school men's idea of faith was: "Faith is the persuasion of things not seen—things which we receive on authority, and not because we can either know or prove them." Thomas Aquinas, says, pertinently: "The faith of which we speak, assents to nothing, except what is revealed by God. We believe on the *authority* of God, and not because we see, know, or feel a thing to be true." This is the purport of the teachings of the great body of scholastic divines, and the doctrine of the reformers. The great question has ever been, whether we are to receive truth on authority, or only upon rational evidence. Truth does not become authoritative until it presents rational evidence of the validity of its claims. Elijah said: "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." The descent of fire was the testimony of God, to the truthfulness of Elijah's declaration. So, in the New Testament God is said to have "borne witness to the truth, by signs, and wonders, and

divers miracles, etc." But why testify by these? Because reason says these things are supernatural, and therefore of God; and truth substantiated by such testimony is to be believed upon *authority*—because *rationally* authoritative. A *perfectly* sincere soul, seeking truth, is under no obligation to believe the Bible to be the Word of God without the best of rational evidence. *When that evidence is furnished, to disbelieve is to be damned!*

But who is to decide what is, and what is not, rational evidence? Every man must decide for himself. There is a *fearful* responsibility on him, *as high as heaven, as deep as hell, and as lasting as eternity!*

Because a thing is not understandable, it is not therefore unreasonable. I cannot understand how God created the world, yet it is reasonable that He did. If it were not reasonable to me, I would not, nay, could not, believe. Is not this seen in all the ignorant, and therefore unreasonable protests of the skeptic? He says: "It looks unreasonable, and therefore I cannot believe it." Convince his reason by informing his mind, and faith follows naturally and necessarily.

"Paul *reasoned* with them out of the Scriptures, that this is the Christ." While every man is conscious that he is under no obligation to believe anything true, the truthfulness of which he has no evidence, or, insufficient evidence, yet it will not do to maintain that there is no truth beyond the excursions of human reason. That would be saying that we are not to accept as true anything that is beyond demonstration.

I cannot understand how it is just, that the iniquities of the fathers should be visited upon their children, unto the third and fourth generation. But reason says: God is holy and just; also the *facts* bearing testimony to the truthfulness of the statement are before me every day and everywhere, and therefore I *must* believe the statement, though my understanding, or rather, *want* of understanding, and feelings, are against my faith. Reason *admits* many things not understandable, and hence faith takes hold of what we cannot perceive, except, as *possible*. Faith makes the possible *real*.

#### FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

There are two things that are fundamentally essential in order to salvation, *viz.*: obedience and faith. Submission to God is the basal element of true manhood. It is the granite foundation on which alone a worthy Christian character may be built. Obedience to God's will—harmony with God, is the law of man's highest development.

An infinity of truth stretches in every direction about us. Much, and that which is *most* important to us, can be known only by faith. Obedience makes faith possible. Obedience brings us into harmony with God. Faith brings us into fellowship with God, and fellowship with God begets in us likeness to God. Conscious harmony and fellowship with God, are the sum of all good to man. How transcendently uplifting and ennobling! The experience is a drinking in of God's own life and blessedness, which makes the labor of life delightful *rest*.

Obedience to God always implies faith in God. They are so closely connected that it is sometimes said that obeying is believing; yet the two acts are entirely distinct in nature. They are always co-existent. As we surrender to God, the Holy Spirit helps us to believe. Surrender to God always implies a renunciation of everything opposed to God, hence a commitment to everything in harmony with Him. One cannot be without the other.

## FAITH AND VOLITION.

Any one can believe if he *will*. Yet, before he can successfully *will* to *believe*, he must *will* to *obey*. Said the Rev. John Inskip: "Occasionally I find that my *will* has much to do with my *faith*. I perceive, more than ever I did, the propriety of the chorus: 'I *will* believe, I *do* believe.' The *will* and the *do*—the determination and the act are closely allied. What a man sincerely and earnestly *wills*, that he is most likely to do. Hence, if a man can truthfully sing: 'I *will* believe,' in a little while he can sing, 'I *do* believe.'" Put your will on the believing side instead of on the doubting side, and soon you will be able to say: "Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph, through our Lord, Jesus Christ."

## FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.

Must a truth be known in order to be believed? Protestants affirm; Romanists deny. Some knowledge of a truth, at least indirect, must precede a correct faith. We must recognize the meaning of a statement, or the reason for it, before we can intelligently believe the statement true. Therefore, faith is limited by a want of knowl-

edge. We can believe only what we, at least, think, we intelligently apprehend is believable.

God can reveal Himself to man's perceptive and conscious nature ; to his perceptive nature through the medium of matter, or mind ; to his conscious nature by faith. A perfect faith is swallowed up in experience and passes into knowledge.

There may be a vast difference in the environments of the faith of different persons. The penitent, believing sinner, unless he is a backslider, has no experimental knowledge, that God will answer his prayer. His faith rests solely on testimony. While the faith of the Christian, especially of the Christian who has been made partaker of the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and who has been victor on a thousand battle fields, has, besides God's Word of Truth to support it, the knowledge that comes of ten thousand vivid and blessed experiences! The penitent believer says: "Granted (upon its own evidences, the testimony of the Church, and of my own consciousness, that I am a sinner, to which the Bible testifies :) he says, granted that the Bible is the Word of God, then God is what the Bible says He is, and will do what it says He will do, and I do not *know*, experimentally, or by mathematical demonstration, that He will forgive my sins, yet to my understanding, the testimony that He will, looks to me reasonable, and irrefutable, and therefore I believe that He can, that He will, and that He does forgive." He is now saved, and has the *experimental knowledge* by his conscious emotions, and the witness of the

Spirit. The Christian always has this knowledge to support his faith, while he asks and believes for other favors, and thus it becomes easier to believe as faith is supported, not only by God's Word of Truth, but by a constantly accumulating volume of experimental knowledge. It is easier for him to believe, because the greater the volume and variety of testimony and knowledge, the easier it becomes to believe. Still it is proper to say here, that the penitent, believing sinner, may have as good evidence beforehand, by testimony, that God will forgive his sins, as that I may have, by testimony, that there was a George Washington. So that his faith has the support of an evidence that comes of testimony, not only of God in the Bible, that he is a sinner, (of which he has knowledge), and that God will forgive; but the testimony of God's witnesses. There is an evidence that comes in undoubtable testimony—undoubtable to the *sincere*, and the evidence that comes in experience. The one may be as undoubtable as the other. We may know a fact by testimony just as certainly as by experience, or observation. Circumstantial evidence may be as convincing as direct. I have no more doubt but that a man by the name of Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, than I should have, had I heard his inaugural address and seen him take the oath of office. In the Word of God I read : " Ask and ye shall receive." A hundred times I have asked and received. Do I not now *know* that if I ask I shall receive? Do I not ask in knowledge rather than in faith? Is faith just as necessary now as in the

beginning ? Or does knowledge, in part at least, take the place of faith ? To illustrate, a neighbor of mine, in whose word, humanly speaking, I have unbounded confidence, says to me : "On my lot there is a dark underground cave, and in that cave is a spring of water." I am thirsty. He says : "Take your pitcher and go down into the cave, following a cord that leads to the spring." I do not *know* that there is a spring there. The only assurance I have is the word of my neighbor. I believe it and act my faith, in his word, go into the cave, find the spring in the darkness, get the water and drink. Again I go, even the hundredth time. Is faith in my neighbor's testimony still necessary that I may get the water ? In this case most certainly not. But suppose my neighbor promises me that on certain conditions, and as often as I will meet them, he will grant me certain specified favors, one of these conditions being that I believe that he will do as he has promised. I take him at his word ; ask and receive, time and again. Now have I *knowledge* that he *will* do as he has promised ? Is faith still necessary ? I have knowledge, *not* that he *will* bestow the promised favors, but that he *did* bestow them when I met the conditions, thereby my confidence in him has been greatly strengthened and confirmed. Faith is *still* as necessary as at *first*. I must still ask in faith, *relying on his promise*.

Knowledge that I *have* had, and knowledge that I *may* have are very different. Knowledge that I *have had* is compatible with a faith for future blessings ; but knowledge that I *may*



have promised blessings, *faith being the condition of receiving them*, is not compatible with faith, because the reception of blessings that depend on *faith in testimony, or promise, cannot be known*; though faith, resting, not only on testimony, but confirmed by past experience, may be as assuring as knowledge itself. God has conditioned the reception of His promised blessings, not on my knowing that He has given, but on my *believing* that He *does* give. Faith is the condition.

#### FAITH AND FEELING, OR EMOTION.

Some kinds of emotion must go before saving faith—of guilt, need, etc. The feelings that God forgives, saves, etc., always *follow* faith. Hodge says: "Our feelings (state of heart) have much to do with our faith, especially when moral or religious truths are the objects of faith. Want of congeniality with the truth produces insensibility to the evidence by which it is supported." In a revival, if prejudice against the leader is cherished in the hearts of Christians, it will prevent or paralyze their faith, and make them hindrances instead of helps.

Thos. Aquinas says: "It is love, or reverence toward God, that inclines the will to believe." Our *feelings* toward God and man have a great deal to do with our faith in God, or unbelief of His testimony. Hence, a man can't believe until he is brought into a proper state of heart towards God—proper state of heart to *believe*. The Divine element in faith would be wanting. Why? Because God will not assist a person living in the practice of sin to believe for blessings conditioned on faith. Peter says (1 Pet. 1:8): "In

whom, though now ye *see* Him not, yet *believing*, ye *rejoice*, with joy *unspeakable and full of glory*." These emotions of joy and glory *follow* the act of faith—"Believing ye rejoice." There is an evidential element in faith—an element that makes us conscious of its existence and operation, but it does not "comprise emotions of joy, peace, and gladness," as taught by the Rev. S. A. Keen, in his "*Faith Papers*." The text quoted above: "Yet believing, ye rejoice, etc.," teaches that *because* of believing, "ye rejoice, etc." "Emotions of joy, peace and gladness" are not *elements* of faith, or the witness of faith, but are *conditioned* on, and *follow* faith. "Therefore, being justified by faith (having been justified), we have *peace* with God, etc." Again Mr. Keen says: "There is a faith-feeling just as there is a fear-feeling or a love-feeling." That is true, but when he teaches that "emotions of joy, peace, and gladness"—and he might just as well have included all other emotions of the believing heart—"are comprised in the witness of faith," he makes the mistake of saying that the witness of the believer's *spirit*—the emotional consciousness of the presence of "the fruits of the Spirit," in the heart—is the witness of faith. These "fruits of the Spirit" (except faith), or the consciousness—the witness of their presence in the heart, *invariably follow* the act of faith, just as the emotions of joy, gladness, and satisfaction follow the act of eating by a hungry man. The *act* of eating must *precede* the emotions. The witness of faith is the element of Divine assurance in saving faith. The sense of possession is not an element of the wit-

ness of faith, but the witness of consciousness—of the believer's spirit. The consciousness of actual possession is not in faith—for that is a contradiction—but *follows* the act of faith, and is the result of the witness of our own spirit, and the witness of the Spirit of God. It is true there may be a sense of anticipation, but not actual possession. I believe, that if I shall be true to God, I shall reach and enjoy heaven. I have no sense that I possess it, but one of *anticipation*, and in no other sense can a believer have a sense of possession, *while he yet has faith* for a thing possible. "All things are yours." Not actually now, but faith makes you heirs of God, etc. The sense of possession in this case is but *anticipative*. So of the sense of satisfaction. Faith always implies dissatisfaction—in a good sense. It is true there may be a *measure* of satisfaction, while there is but an imperfect faith, but the degree of satisfaction follows, and is measured as a rule by the degree of faith. More, satisfaction is never complete till faith is not only complete, but has been transmuted into experimental knowledge.

#### FAITH, AND THE OTHER GRACES.

Since "The Greatest Thing in the World," and "The First Thing in the World" are attracting so much attention, it will not be amiss to call your thought, more especially, to "Faith" and "Love." Faith is the root grace. Love is the crowning grace. Faith is a means to an end. Love is that end. Faith is the pioneer grace. "Have faith in God," and all the other graces will follow. The highest form of faith is that which

works by love. In proportion as faith strengthens, the other graces will increase ; perhaps not all in the same proportion.

It is with pleasure that I quote the Rev. A. J. Gordon, who, in his : "The First Thing in the World," says of faith and love in their relation to each other : "Faith is as radical as love is expansive ; and the latter has but little power to branch out, and bear the incomparable fruits of kindness, and patience, and humility, and unselfishness, except, as through the former, it is rooted in Christ, and draws constant life and nourishment from Him. Have we sufficiently noted the fact that in the repeated grouping of the Christian graces, found in Scripture, faith is invariably assigned the *first* place, being made to stand nearest to Christ, and a kind of head and sponsor, to all her sister virtues ? Beautiful, and impossible of translation, is the picture given us in second Peter (1:5-8) : 'Add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity.' Looking into the original Greek, we find a picture of a chorus, whose minstrels are selected, one after another, and linked into a chosen band. Standing at the head, not only leading, but recruiting this choir of Christian graces, is *faith*. She is the Divinely appointed chorister, who is responsible for all the rest—virtue, kindness, temperance, patience, goodness, brotherly kindness, charity—and directs their song.

If we ask why such prominence is accorded to

her, the answer is found in the verse just preceding. 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' Here we see two heredities set in contrast: 'The corruption that is in the world through lust;' human nature, fallen and depraved through Adam's sin, so that all who are in it are inclined to evil, and incapable of holy love. Into this inheritance we came by our first birth. On the other hand is the Divine nature—God's own blessed and incorruptible life, brought into the world, through Christ, the second Adam. Of this we are made partakers, by the second birth, as writes the apostle Peter: 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever; \* \* and this is the Word, which, by the Gospel, is preached unto you.' (1 Pet. 1:23-25). And, which grace shall be counted worthy to receive this Word, and to appropriate the unspeakable gift which it contains? To faith, only, is accorded this high honor. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' (Rom. 10:17). With ear bent to the life-bearing promise; with hand immediately touching the life-giving Lord, she *alone* receives the gift of God for us, and for all her kindred graces. 'He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life.' (John 3:36). 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on His name*; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,

but of God.' (John 1:12-13). What wonder that this revelation of the Divine birth, and of the new heredity, which it involves, should call for a song, and that faith should be bidden to gather this chorus for the anthem? An entire octave of graces now appears arrayed, and if we question them, each will acknowledge her subordination to faith. Knowledge will say that, in the school of grace, we do not know in order to believe, but we believe in order to know; and brotherly kindness, that we do not do good works in order to obtain eternal life, but attain eternal life in order to do good works. As for blessed *Agape*, whom we name 'love,' we find her standing at the end of the line—the last in the row of singers, and, as we praise her, as the greatest grace in the world, her modest answer is: '*Love is of God*, and every one that loveth hath been begotten of God' (1 John 4:7); thus readily confessing that her own existence depends on faith, through whom *alone* eternal life is communicated. So, it is by her own companions and kindred that to her is the primacy and headship of faith accorded."

#### FAITH AND WORKS.

As I have devoted an entire lecture to the consideration of faith and works, I will but mention the subject now.

Christian works are faith acted. The best way to get more grace is to use what we have. "Use all the grace you have," said Mr. Wesley. "This is certainly right. But *now* expect all the grace you want. This is the *secret* of heart religion. At the present moment work and believe."

"If faith produce no works, I see  
 That faith is not a living tree ;  
 Thus faith and works together grow,  
 No separate life they e'en can know,  
 They're soul and body, hand and heart—  
 What God hath joined let no man part."

—*H. More.*

#### FAITH AND POWER.

On the action of faith depends the operation of and expenditure of saving-power. The measure of the expenditure of saving-power depends on the degree of faith. Are we not to take literally, and just as it is stated, that "All things (agreeable to God's will) are possible to him that believeth?" In his *faith* is the *power* "that overcometh the world."

#### FAITH AND CHARACTER.

A man's faith, or unfaith, determines his character and shapes his destiny. However sincerely a man believes falsehood, it will certainly result in evil. Dr. James B. Walker very aptly remarks: "It is necessarily true that the belief of truth will invariably lead a man right and secure his temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests; and on the contrary the belief of falsehood will lead a man wrong, and destroy his interests in relation to whatever the falsehood pertains, whether it be temporal or eternal; \* \* therefore Christ laid at the foundation of the Christian system this vital and necessary principle: 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.'"

The promise is the lock, behind which is the inexhaustible wealth of the Promiser. Obedience is the only pathway of approach. Faith is the

golden key to the lock. True prayer is the hand that turns the key. An all-conquering purpose, coupled with the helpful operations of the Holy Ghost, are the strength of the hand of prayer, that turns the key of faith.

“My prayer hath power with God ; the grace  
Unspeakable I now receive ;  
Through *faith* I see Thee face to face,  
I see Thee face to face, and live !  
In vain I have not wept and strove ;  
Thy nature and Thy name is love.”

—*Charles Wesley.*





## LECTURE XII.

*PREVAILING PRAYER AND PERSONAL HELP FROM  
GOD; OR, THE FIRST GREAT CONDITION OF THE  
SALVATION OF A LOST WORLD IS DIVINE  
HELP FOR THE CHURCH IN ANSWER TO  
THE PRAYER: "LORD HELP ME!"*

NOT A HAPPEN SO.

There is a divinity in the narrative (Mat. 15:21-28) of the struggle of the Syro-Phoenician woman in her effort to save her child.

It was not an accident that this woman met Christ as she did; or that this narrative is in the word of God. God incorporated this narrative into the volume of truth, that He might thereby teach the Church, in all coming ages, one of the most important lessons, in experimental and practical theology.

A HEATHEN, OUR TEACHER.

If we will follow this heathen woman in her effort to save her child, we will learn how to prevail in prayer for ourselves and others. The characteristics that appear in this heathen woman's effort to save her child must appear in all efforts that succeed eminently in soul saving.

THE PASTOR AND THE REVIVAL.

At this point I cannot do better than to introduce to you the Rev. Wm. W. Newell, who writes of his own experience: "I had seen so many revivals averted by the condition of pastors, that I devoted the entire week of prayer to a

preparation of my own heart and life. I believed that I was a Christian, but I wanted to see myself as God saw me. I wanted to be thoroughly humbled and completely emptied of self. I wanted to press upon the Church and the world the overwhelming motives of God's eternal Word with all the magnetism of a fervid, confident, loving, Divine spirit. In pleading with Jehovah, for others, I would obey His command: 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.' On Monday I considered the infinitely holy character of God. By this stupendous theme my soul was greatly awed. On Tuesday I considered my own particular sins, in the presence of that Jehovah, with whom even the solemn meeting may be iniquity. I asked myself, 'What of your pride, ambition, self-seeking? What have you lacked in love, trust, spirituality, improvement of time, and toil for the lost?' On Wednesday I considered God's kindness to me, my family, and my church. I was amazed at His munificence. I was abashed at my own unthankfulness. But He had snatched away my loved ones, yet He enabled me to say, 'O, God, Thy will be done; my Jesus, as Thou wilt.' On Thursday my questions were: 'Why do you want a revival of religion? Is it chiefly to build up one man or one church, to make your people more genial and loving? Or, are you seeking first of all to honor Jesus in the salvation of the perishing? Have you been asking God for things which you do not expect to receive, and which you make slight effort to secure?' By this time I was ready to cry with the Apostle: 'O, wretched man

that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' On Friday I was prepared, as never before, to look to Jesus. Mere earthly advantages seemed to me like the idle wind. I confessed and loathed my sin. I looked upon Him whom I had pierced, and I mourned for Him. I laid myself upon His altar to do and to suffer His will. With great confidence I sought His Spirit. My view was definite; my feeling was deep; my soul was filled with confidence and peace. Each evening, during the week, I had poured forth to my church the experience of the day. At the close of the Friday meeting numbers exclaimed: 'O, what a meeting we have had!' The great revival had commenced."

The following is related of the Rev. T. H. Hagerly, and it is so very appropriate that I venture to introduce it: "Some months ago, at a minister's lunch-table, the conversation turned on revivals, revival methods, evangelists and their comparative importance. The conversation was full, free, and easy, among brethren of Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, and Congregationalist churches. Most of these pastors had expressed their opinions quite freely, only one, an Episcopalian, remaining quiet. He was a man of known convictions on all vital questions, and was therefore appealed to personally for his views on the question of discussion. He hesitated a moment, and then spoke in substance as follows. 'I approve of all you have said about the desirability and necessity of a revival of pure and undefiled religion in all our churches, but I think I must differ a little in the method of securing

this desired object from any views I have heard expressed to-day.'

All looked expectantly, and said: 'Let us have your views, brother, we all want to hear.'

He answered modestly, and said: 'It may look presumptuous in me to differ from all my brethren, as though I would be your instructors, yet I am honest in my convictions.'

'Let us hear! Let us hear!' was the request of all the brethren. After a moment's pause he spoke in substance as follows: 'Brethren, I have been accustomed to look on the ordained pastor as God's leader and shepherd of the flock—as God's ordained leader in all good works and advance movements. I think the pastor should lead his people out to all refreshing showers of grace. Why does he not do it? It may be that his own heart needs refreshing. He may have become worldly and lost his hold on God, as well as the people. It may be that he needs a revival in his own heart!

'This may not be so strange, after all. The pastor is so accustomed to look all the time at others, and after others, that he is in danger of forgetting his own personal relations to God. Did not Christ teach the disciples the necessity of going apart for a while to pray? Would it not be well for us to imitate this example of Christ with his disciples? Then may we not be able to come back and feed the multitude with bread? If we get our own souls well roused and in sweetest harmony with God, may we not then be fully able to lead the people of our churches out into green pastures and beside still waters?

Others may help, but should not the pastor be the moving and powerful agent in God's work in the Church? If we are really what we ought to be, need we any more?

'If our churches are badly backslidden, should we not commence with ourselves, and have a pastor's revival? Is not that the proper thing for us to do? I think this is the case, and I am willing to join you, brethren, in such a movement as this.'

The countenances of the pastors showed plainly that a chord had been struck, that touched the soul. First one and then another said: 'Brethren, I think the brother is right and we would better accept the conclusions.'"

God's order is that the Church must be Divinely helped before the lost can be saved; then how appropriate that the pastor be the first one helped by God. We cannot reverse this order and succeed in rescuing the perishing. Christ commanded His disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel, etc." "But tarry *until* ye be endued with *power* from on high." "Ye shall receive power *after* that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and (*then* and *not until* then) ye shall be witnesses unto Me"—witnesses surcharged with Divine—*saving* power. Without this Divine qualification all efforts to save a single sinner would be utterly futile. Had they gone before they received power from on high, they doubtless would have perished by the hands of their enemies. But having received power their enemies "were not able to resist the wisdom and

the spirit by which they spake," "and there were *daily* added to the church."

A DESPERATE CASE.

This woman's was a desperate case. "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." So *ours* is a desperate case. Our daughters, sons, husbands, wives and neighbors, unsaved, are possessed of sin, which will as inevitably, absolutely, and eternally ruin soul and body, in perdition, as though possessed of a thousand devils each.

GREAT CONCERN PRECEDES GREAT FAITH.

This mother was greatly *distressed* on account of the condition of her child; a condition of prevailing prayer for her child. So *we* must be greatly distressed on account of the exposure of sinners about us, to eternal death. Why are we not more so? Is it possible that our neighbors, and even some of our kindred, are momentarily liable to drop into an endless hell, and we have so little concern about them? They *are* thus exposed, or they are *not*. If they *are* then we are guilty of *criminal* indifference. If they are *not* thus exposed, then we should devote our attention and energies in some other direction. How often this mother's experience has been repeated in the experiences of mothers since, whose daughters or sons have been grievously vexed with sin.

WITH CHRIST, SHE TOOK THE SINNER'S PLACE.

She made her daughter's case her *own*. She did not pray: "Have mercy on my *child*," but "Have mercy on *me*. Lord help *me*!" Christ made the sinner's case His own. "He tasted death for (instead of) every man." So we, at

the throne of grace, must make the sinner's case our own, if we would have power both with God and with men. Paul said: "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for (instead of) my brethren." When Rev. John Smith had received great light, as to the peril of sinners, after much time given to wrestling prayer, burying his face in his hands, he exclaimed: "I'm a broken hearted man! I'm a broken hearted man! Not on my own account, but I have had such a view of the awful peril of the unsaved, etc!!" Why such concern? Because he had made the interests of lost souls about him his *own*! Daniel put himself in the stead of his people and confessed and prayed for them. Said he: "I set my face unto the Lord God, by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord, my God, and made my confession and said: O Lord, the great and dreadful God \* \* we have sinned and committed iniquity and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts, and from Thy judgments. \* \* \* Now, therefore, O, our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant and his supplications \* \*; O, Lord, hear! O, Lord, forgive! O, Lord, harken and do! Defer not, for Thine own sake, O, my God!"

A MOTHER, IN HER SON'S STEAD.

In one of Mr. Moody's meetings, a lady who was a Christian, was found among the seekers. She was asked if she was a Christian. She answered: "I am." "Then why did you come as a seeker?" She replied: "I came instead of my absent, unsaved son."

FROM CHRIST, TO SINNERS, BY THE CHURCH.

Christ gave the bread to the disciples and the disciples gave it to the multitude. So it is to-day. The Church cannot give to the unsaved what she has not received herself. In proportion as she receives of "all the fulness of God," sinners will receive convicting and saving power.

Right along this line of thought Mr. Moody says to pastors: "The best way is for the pastor to say he wants to see all who desire a revival. Don't let anyone else come. Then get down on your knees and pour out your *hearts*, asking God to revive yourself! Don't be in a hurry to pray for your friends. Hold the people to *themselves*! You never see an anxious Church without souls being saved. Don't wait for the whole Church to move. Get two or three and soon there will be six or seven. Form a praying band. Pray for the work, and the blessing will come. That plan never failed."

THE ANSWER DELAYED.

The answer to this woman's prayer was delayed. "He answered her not a word." Why? It has been said "To stimulate her faith." I answer not to stimulate her faith, but because of her *lack* of faith. Had her faith been sufficient at first, all the powers of earth and hell could not have delayed, for one moment, redeeming love on its mission of salvation to this child. Why are answers to our prayers, for things agreeable to God's will, often delayed? I answer, because of unbelief, or a want of faith. Delays are not always denials. God can't give until the conditions, on the human side, are fulfilled. His



giving will never be delayed when the conditions are fulfilled.

#### DIFFICULTY AFTER DIFFICULTY.

An additional difficulty was thrown in her way. "His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us." "It is very offensive to our cultured and velvety ears to have this woman keep up such a racket. Better that the devil remain in possession of her daughter, than that we be thus tortured." Ah! how often the heart-burdened and zealous Christian is hindered by the lukewarm and backslidden in heart. The greatest difficulties, in Christ's way to lost souls, are to be found in the hearts and lives of His own disciples. Christ's way to the lost is through the Church. In proportion as He is permitted to come into the Church, in the fulness of His life and power, He will come to the unsaved in convicting power.

#### CHRIST EXPLAINS.

His true position is stated, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." What will she now do? She has reached her lowest depth—her darkest moment. She utters her last cry, voicing the deep consciousness of her need, and her reliance on the Redeemer. Sometimes our way to holiness, and power, and the salvation of the lost seems cut off, by the Redeemer Himself; but it is only *seeming*. If we do not receive what we ask, it is always because the hindrances are on the *human* side.

#### NOT TO BE DENIED.

Mark this woman's perseverance. "Then came she and worshiped Him, saying, Lord

*help* me!" She grew desperate, and threw herself athwart the Saviour's pathway. Seemingly, she hoped against all hope. Self-desperate she believed. The greater the difficulties the greater the development, and victory of faith. Says Wheedon: "This appeal, wrung from the depths of an agonized, yet believing heart, moved the Redeemer to break the silence." After such an appeal God always speaks. Such appeals reach His heart and move his saving arm. God only can help us, my brethren, in our struggle to save the lost, and the cry of each heart should be: "Lord help *me*!"

#### TURNING DIFFICULTIES TO ACCOUNT.

Still the blessing is withheld. Mark says that Christ said, "Let the children first be filled." "Children *first* be filled!" With marvelous quickness came the thought: "Isn't there hope for me here? Then my time is coming, for it will be some one else's turn after the children's. May it not be mine?"

Christ speaks an additional, seemingly, discouraging word. "It is not meet to take the *children's* bread and cast it to *dogs*." What a staggering rebuff! What a stunning blow! Is this death to her hope? Nay, it is life to the dead. Said she, "I have it now! The victory is mine! I don't want the children's *bread*! I ask only the *crumbs*."

#### NEARING VICTORY.

Now she is reaching a state of heart, consistently with which Christ can answer her prayer—a state of deepest humility—one of the conditions of a victorious faith. Mark her humility. How

marvelous in our eyes! She answered: "Truth, Lord, it is not meet to take the children's *bread* and cast it to dogs; yet, the dogs eat of the *crumbs* that fall from their master's table." I don't want the children's *bread*. I am willing to take my place as a *dog*, under my Master's table, and will thankfully lick up the crumbs that fall. One crumb of Thy power will cast the devil out of my child! In this day, what *Christian's* humility measures down with this *heathen's*? The deepest humility of soul attracts, from the upper skies, the mightiest bolts of God's redeeming power. What an ingenious reply to the Master's words? Christ could no longer withhold the blessing sought, and in mercy and love exclaimed: "O, woman! great is thy *faith*, etc!" As she took her place low in the vale of humility she put her hand on the lever under the throne of God. Her great humility made it possible for her faith to be great. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." If you wish to be a prince, and prevail with God, then you must humble yourself as did this heathen.

## VICTORY.

She prevailed! Christ responded: "Be it unto thee even as *thou* wilt!" To the humble, believing Christian, God yields, and lets him have his own way, because such a believer always wants God's way. If you resolve on bringing a sinner to Christ, and believe for it, as you *may*, God will say to you: "Be it unto thee, even as *thou* wilt." Such humility and faith bring the soul into its normal relation to God—into perfect accord with God's will, so that He

can say: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." What was the result? "Her daughter was made whole from that very hour"—the very moment Christ spoke the word.

This woman's great desire for the salvation of her child was begotten by a realization of the great *peril* of her child. So, without a realization of the great peril of sinners, we cannot have such desire as will compel us to cry until the answer is given.

The great difficulties in her way, she made stepping stones to victory, through Him "which always causeth us to triumph."

Great victory followed over self and over the devil. As God has victory over us, He enables us to have victory over others, for their good. "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with *men shalt thou also prevail.*" The way to save sinners is to get fully saved *ourselves!* The way to fill others with the truth is to get filled with the truth *ourselves!* The way to get others filled with the Spirit is to get filled *ourselves!*

The most available *first* prayer we can make for the lost is the prayer of this heathen: "Lord help *me.*" Save me. Save me from *all* sin. Fill me with the Holy Ghost, and endue me with power!

If the Church was saved as she might be, how soon the world would be saved.

When thou dost talk with God—in prayer, I mean,  
Lift up pure hands; lay down all lusts' desires;  
Fix thoughts on heaven; present a conscience clean;  
Since holy blame to Mercy's throne aspires,  
Confess fault's guilt, crave pardon for thy sins,  
Tread holy paths; call grace to guide therein.

—Robert Southwell.

## LECTURE XIII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND IMPORTUNITY; OR, THE MOST OBSTINATE FAITH THE MOST PLEASING TO GOD.*

What I shall say on this subject will be largely from the standpoint of the church praying for a revival.

In Genesis (32:26.) Jacob said: "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

The most important and the mightiest act that man can do on earth is to prevail with God in prayer.

Unanswered prayers are a reproach to Christian people and produce skepticism within and without the church. When prayer, for anything agreeable to God's will, is not answered, the hindering cause is in the petitioner. Mark, I say when prayer is not *answered*. We may get the answer any time, or as quickly as we will exercise the necessary faith, but the realization of the answer, in *some* cases, is necessarily delayed. This last thought applies more especially to mediatorial prayer—prayer for others.

#### BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER NEEDED.

If the subject of prayer was properly understood and Christians were willing to comply with its conditions, they would put up such petitions as would be answered. The might of such prayers is more powerful than an army with banners. Nothing can stand before it. Un-

answered prayer is weakening to the faith, spirituality and Christian character of those who offer it—I mean prayer unanswerable, because of its indifference, coldness, heartlessness, perfunctoriness, and faithlessness.

#### THE HINDRANCE IN THE PETITIONER.

That God Himself is always ready to answer prayer, that is agreeable to His will, there can be no doubt; but there may be circumstances, on the human side, that make it impossible for God, always, to answer at once in keeping with his fixed methods of saving souls. The petitioner may not feel the importance of the case as he should, or he may be full of pride or formality, or have too little faith, or ask from wrong motives, etc. Till the petitioner is brought into a right state of heart God, consistently with his plans cannot answer. A lady had for eight years prayed for the conversion of her husband; yet he remained unsaved. She became desperately in earnest and God answered her prayer and saved her husband. Doubtless she might have prevailed for the answer the first year instead of waiting till the eighth. Unfaithfulness to the sinner may be the cause of delay in answering intercessory prayer. The seed must be sown, if need be, by personal effort so that as we bow at the throne of grace, we can say to our Father, we have done what we could.

We are taught in the Word of God to “pray always with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.” In the parable of the widow and unjust judge, we are asked: “And shall not God

avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him?" The very core truth of this parable is, that we are to continue to besiege the throne of grace *until* we receive an answer. Our prayers are often not answered, because, through discouragement we cease to pray. Reflect, decide as to what you want. Ascertain either by the Word or Spirit, or both, whether your desire is according to the will of God. Convinced that it is, yield not till the answer is given. Christ, our great prayer pattern, teaches us how to pray by the parable of the man who begged of his neighbor, at midnight, three loaves of bread for his hungry friend; and of the unjust judge and importunate widow. The *great* lesson the Master seeks to teach us is, that we are to persevere in prayer when God seems to deny or refuse.

In the wrestlings of Jacob and Elijah the pleadings of Abraham and Moses, the confessions and supplications of Samuel and David, and in the parables above mentioned, there is a storehouse full of instruction as to importunate and intercessory prayer. One waits trustingly for years for an answer. Another cries persistently, "day and night," and *speedily* receives the answer. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you that He will avenge them, speedily." Christians who have mightily prevailed with God, in prayer, have done so, often, because of their indomitable and dogged hang-on-it-iveness. Their stick-to-it-iveness has carried with it their faith to the Pisgah-height of immediate and blessed victory.

## GOD PLEASED WITH PERSISTENCE.

Nothing, in the conduct of the obedient child of God, is so pleasing to his Heavenly Father as, that the dominating condition of the cessation of his cry, "day and night," is that the Father shall answer "*speedily!*" While your resolution does not *commit* you, to *complete* victory at any cost, you cannot *fully* prevail.

## THE SECURED ANSWER IS WAITING.

The answer for any promised blessing is ours, in Christ, *this* moment. By the atonement and intercession of Christ it is *already secured*, and is waiting to be bestowed. The moment faith for it becomes perfect, the answer will be given. Till the *full* price is paid, the answer will not be given.

## BURNING THE BRIDGES.

There must be a complete commitment. All the bridges must be burned behind us—leaving no way of retreat. Such a commitment must be made, in reliance on the Holy Spirit's help, as will shut us up, if necessary, to a life-long persistence for the answer. Such a commitment implies a vigorous, venturing faith. It also implies a complete submission to all the will of God.

## SCRIPTURE EXAMPLES OF IMPORTUNITY.

We have many examples of persevering prayer, in the Old Testament Scriptures, as also, in the New Testament. Again, and again, we read how repeated importunities prevailed. How unwearied perseverance became a holy violence. Fervency alone may last but an hour. There must be perseverance.

Mark Jacob's perseverance. After the Angel



had touched his thigh and put it out of joint—utterly depriving him of all power to wrestle, Jacob still cried: “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me!” If the Angel had said, an *hour* before He did: “Let me go,” doubtless, an hour before he did, Jacob would have prevailed.

SELFISHNESS MUST DIE.

The Angel touched Jacob's body at its strongest point, to bring him to a realization of his own weakness, and to bring him to a supreme effort of will and faith. So God touches our selfishness, at its strongest point, to humble us sufficiently, and bring us to the effort of will and faith necessary to take the blessing sought. The state of complete self-helplessness must be reached, before we can receive sufficient Divine helpfulness. This does not annihilate *self*, but *selfishness*.

THE SURRENDERED REFUSES TO SURRENDER.

The *fully* surrendered soul *refuses* to surrender, as he rises in holy daring, exclaiming: “I will not let Thee go (Thou *Almighty* Friend and Lover) except Thou bless me”—except *Thou* dost yield, to my request!

There is too often, simply, an enjoyable acquiescence in the Divine will when world-wide interests are trembling in the balances, and demand that the petitioner exercise his right in Christ, and that he rise up in the might of his being—in the utmost exercise of his *will* power, as well as his faith, and violently *take* the kingdom by force. The petitioner is not to lose his identity, or lose sight of himself. Our heavenly Father is immeasurably pleased when we *claim*—humbly

but *unyieldingly claim*, our right in Christ, His dearly beloved Son. Of course we must approach the Infinite One, confessing with Abraham: "I am but dust and ashes." Unyielding perseverance implies strong faith; a faith that will soon measure up to high-water mark.

CLAIM YOUR PRIVILEGE AND HOLD ON.

Prayer is the exercise of faith. It is reaching out and taking hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer—our great sin-offering and claiming Him—claiming Him this moment as our Redeemer from all sin. Claiming Him as the Redeemer of our unsaved friend. If you were in the water, and could be saved, only by grasping my outstretched hand, and I should say, take hold and I will deliver you; you not only believe, but you *act* your faith at once, by taking hold and holding on, as for life. Thus, Jacob *clung* to the covenant Angel, and *hung on*, with an *all* conquering purpose. He *demand*ed! He *pre-vailed*! He *conquered*! O, my brother, the trouble is, we don't *cling* to—*cleave* to God, whether or no, in spite of everything. Do you, *this* moment, *insist* on being filled with the Holy Ghost, and endued with Divine power? *Do* you? Do you *claim* the salvation of the lost?

Who can estimate the power of a being endued with immortality; especially if that being is helped by the almighty energies of the Holy Ghost?

TRIALS OF YOUR PLUCK WILL COME.

There will come trials of your faith and perseverance. This is as it should be, for faith and perseverance can be strengthened only by their

trial. If difficulties are in your way, as they will be, God thereby indicates to you that, by overcoming these difficulties, He means to lead you to a glorious victory and a blessed development of the graces of the Spirit, and a Christ-like character. Then you must press over these hard places with all the will power and vehemence, if need be, that you can summon. Take these temptations, to faint and give up, as promises of a complete answer, on condition that you persevere. Then your *discouragements* become your *encouragements*.

#### FALSE SUPPORTS SWEEP AWAY.

In Jacob's case the blessing was delayed until there came to him a sense of exhaustion—of utter self-helplessness. God convinces us of our utter inability that He may more wonderfully display His saving power, in us, and, through us. This is His established method. He cuts off our vain resources, that, applying only to Him, we may prove the fulness of His love and sink, by absolute recumbency, into His almighty arms. Said Paul: "I glory in my infirmities (why?) that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak, then am I strong. A seeming refusal to answer, only stimulated Jacob's perseverance and faith.

Said the Angel: "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Was this a denial? No. Faith discovers hope in the depths of fear. Jesus said to the woman, whose daughter was a demoniac: "It is not meet to take, etc." Out of her burdened and wrought up soul she exclaimed: "Truth Lord, etc." She got the start of the blessed

Master, and it was just what He wanted *she* should do. It was for *Jacob's* sake, and not for His *own* convenience, that the Divine Wrestler said: "Let me go," that he might lift the perseverance, the fervency and the faith, of Jacob, into the *supreme* effort of his life. Without this apparent indisposition to bless him, on the part of the covenant Angel, he would never have made the effort. His faith would never have measured up to the blessing needed.

So God says to every persevering, wrestling soul: "Let me go;" but it is the *wooing of infinite love and benevolence*, to lead the struggling, wrestling soul, assisted by the Holy Spirit, to a superhuman effort—superhuman, because Divinely assisted—when the Angel Wrestler lifts the clinging, unyielding supPLICATOR, up, *up*, UP, into the clear, calm and heavenly region of complete victory; so that now every attribute of the Godhead, and every law in the universe, are pledged to maintain his cause. Persistent prayer, accompanied by faith, subdues the invincible and prevails with Omnipotence! Hallelujah! "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Jacob perceived, in the request, that He might *not* go without *his* consent. O, *loving, willing* captive, Thou art *my* loving, willing captive too—for *I* will not let Thee go, except Thou bless *me*!

#### ONE OF THE PROFOUNDTEST MYSTERIES.

To most Christians, one of the profoundest mysteries connected with this subject of prayer is, the *need*, often, of importunity—of persistent pleading. Ignorance of the reasons of this need makes of these mysteries embarrassing stumbling

blocks in the pathway of the inexperienced Christian—the babe in Christ. Why it is often necessary to plead, and wrestle, and wait when we are told that God is love, that He is infinitely benevolent, that He is more willing to give to His child than earthly parents are to theirs; yet the answer is often delayed till after the severest effort. Persistence in prayer, by-and-by, will solve the mystery. A true faith, that is *persistent*, can never be disappointed.

#### WHAT IT IS LIKE.

He who knows the irresistible power of prayer, by a study of the Word, from his own, and the experiences of others, and steps out on God's promise, in the name of Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit, with invincible purpose, never to yield till God answers, will not be discouraged by delay. While the young Christian *need* not be discouraged, if he does not get the answer at once, the veteran *will* not. Often, the *most* discouraging moment is when the pleading soul is on the eve of victory. To the inexperienced it is like climbing, for the first time, the steep mountain side in midnight darkness, by the aid of a lantern, not knowing how far away is the mountain peak. He has just strength enough to reach the summit. Hour after hour he climbs, more and more exhausted, yet he knows that every step brings him nearer the summit. By-and-by every step seems the last he can take, and, often, he is tempted to give up. He debates the question. To retrace his steps is defeat. He summons all his courage, hope and strength, and struggles up, step after step, and just

when all gives way, except his faith, he plants his feet on the wondrous height, and opens his eyes towards the golden gates of day, and beholds the bursting glories of the king of day. The victory is his. Ravishing visions of grandeur and glory thrill, again and again, his enraptured soul and he bathes in the glory of the new born day, and drinks in the blessedness of visions to which the multitudes are strangers. He exclaims: "It pays ! It pays, a thousand times for the effort !"

#### ENCOURAGEMENT.

Praying one, often almost discouraged, the victory is before you, awaiting your persevering effort. How these thoughts revive the experiences of God's conquering ones. There is a peak to every mountainous difficulty climbed by prayer. Perseverance will reach it. In one case it is near at hand, in another far away and beyond the clouds, kissed by the golden sunlight of heaven. But the peak must be reached before complete victory comes. The higher the peak, the greater and more blessed the victory. Hallelujah ! No one knows, at first, how far away is the peak. It may not be many steps distant. It may require days and weeks of weary toil to reach it. Perseverance will win.

#### EACH SUCCESSIVE EFFORT EASIER.

Every effort of prayer for different subjects requires a distinct effort, though, in the main, like other efforts, yet each successive effort for the same or similar objects, is easier. The soul becomes stronger, faith mightier, and confidence begotten by previous victories is like the helping hand of the strong one who leads the way.

The first struggle along a certain line may be long and arduous but when victory is gained, and maintained, access to the throne is comparatively easy, and such is the close, open, intimate, and easy communication with the unseen world, that often all that is necessary to get an answer for other objects is to look up, for a few moments, and the Holy Spirit witnesses that our prayer is heard and answered.

THE MORE FULLY CONSECRATED, THE EASIER.

They who are far away from God, because of their littleness of faith, struggle with the Divine Wrestler at arm's length, while they who live very near the Lord, because of their mighty faith, close in with the Angel of the covenant, and, with comparative ease win the victory.

PRAYER AND THE WILL.

So much in prayer depends on how much *will* power we put into our effort. God has made the execution of *His* will, in many things, depend on the will of man. "Of God's will, as revealed in his promises, so much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts. When once God has revealed what He is willing to do for us, the responsibility for the execution of that will rests with us." When God reveals what He is willing to do for others, by us, the responsibility for the execution of that will rests with us.

Will power in prayer is one of the most important conditions of prevailing prayer—of the most marvelous victories of faith. All moral giants have great will power. They have great will power because they have exercised that power. They are giants because they *willed* to

conquer, then conquered. An enlightened, consecrated, indomitable, active, and aggressive will may have what it *will*, sooner or later, so far as God Himself is able to make a human being conqueror. It was said of Luther: "He can have what he will." The mightiest conquerors who have won the world's greatest victories have conquered on their knees, (1.) Because, they *willed* that they would fully surrender to God, and *did* it: and (2.) Because, they *willed* that God, in fulfillment of His promises, should surrender to them, and He did it. This is not irreverence, but the statement of a loving Father's pleasure and plan.

WHERE SHALL WE PLACE THE LIMIT?

Who dares to limit the power of a human being created in the image of God; whose devotion to the Almighty is perfect, and whose will power and faith have reached their highest possible present development. As our lives become hid with Christ in God; as we grow in grace; as our will power and faith enlarge; as we become one *with* Christ, and *in* Christ, it is the delight of our Father in heaven to say unto us: "Be it unto thee even as *thou* wilt." "What wilt *thou* that *I* do?" It is equally His delight to hear his child say in reply, in and by the Holy Ghost: "Father, I *will* all that Thou hast promised, because it is *Thy* will that I should *so* will." Jacob said: "I *will*," and the covenant Angel said: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men." The Syro-Phoenician woman *willed* to have an answer to her prayer, and



Christ exclaimed: "Be it unto thee even as thou *wilt*!"

THE TWO HIGHEST PEAKS.

The two highest and most sublime peaks of the mountain range of prayer—the two crowning acts of faith are acts that, to the superficial in the school of prayer, seem contradictory, *viz.* "Father, I *will*," and "Father, *not* my will!" The one is that act of the consecrated soul, conscious of the peril of yet undamned souls; conscious of his awful responsibility and accountability; conscious of acting God's will and with an eye to His glory; conscious of his right in Christ's right at a throne of grace, and conscious of the girdings of the Holy Spirit's power for victory, the man of God in all his inherent and heaven endued might, rises into one of the two *supreme* acts of a godly life, with all reverence and affection, saying: "Father, I will, that Thy will be done."

The other supreme act of a godly life, is when the powers of darkness come upon the child of God like a flood; when the unutterable agony so presses the soul, quivering with anguish, that it seems literally unendurable. As far as he knows, it is the Father's will that he should drink the cup of bitterness, and, after praying in an agony, with Paul and Christ three times, he exclaims from the lowest depths of a soul clinging to God: "Father *not* my will!"

We do not prevail with God in prayer by a simple acquiescence in His will. Of course we cannot prevail *against* God's will; but He has, in love and wisdom, conditioned the bestowment

of certain favors, on a faith supported by the mightiest and most persistent efforts of the *will*. Limpness in the hands of God is not prayer. Utmost prayer is to *unyieldingly refuse* a denial, and most *ardently and doggedly insist* on having our *rights in Christ!* This is what our Heavenly Father most ardently desires, and lovingly wills.

#### THE REASON WHY.

God designs, by making it *necessary*, often, to wrestle in prayer, to create and develop in us *force—will power*. To make us resolute as Jacob, bold as Moses, persistently humble as the Syro-Phoenician woman, and incorrigibly persistent as one who has an unjust judge to worry down. In this way God seeks to beget in us the utmost *will* power, implied in desperation, and consistent with reverence. He would gird us up in our righteous personality, to the highest point possible, and then, having set up and energized, and developed our infirm personality into royalty, He declares that He will enthrone us by-and-by, to reign with Him, because, as prevailing princes, we have power with God, and have prevailed.

Then, wrestling prayer has its reason and justification in the character developed by the struggle. It furnishes the discipline and experience needed in the highest character-development, the greatest victories of faith, the deepest insight into the character and life of God; into the will of God, the power of the Gospel, and the secrets of our own hearts. Nothing else so transforms

us into the likeness of Christ. Nothing else so conquers the hindrances in the unseen world.

GREAT RESULTS FOLLOW GREAT EFFORTS.

As in other things, great efforts are followed by great results, or, rather, great results do not follow without great efforts; so in the work of prayer. Then let us not be discouraged. God will not delay the answer one moment longer than is necessary. Nay, He will do all in His power to hasten the answer. Certain answers are conditioned on certain developments of character and faith. There may be, nay, always are reasons outside of ourselves why the answer is delayed, more or less, when praying for *another*. There may be things in God's government that have to be put right, through our prayer, before the answer can fully come. A true faith can afford to wait, not with folded arms, but in persistent, fervent prayer, knowing that a loving Father waits to answer, and will do so the moment the conditions are met.

How blessedly conscious, after each struggle, of increased confidence and strength—a struggle that carries us out, and on, and *up* into the greatest possible present effort. There is a conscious girding with a power that seems almost unbounded.

ILLUSTRATION.

“In 1868 Mrs. Maggie Newton Van Cott held a revival meeting at Stone Ridge, Ulster county, New York. At the opening of the meeting, she announced, under the influence of the Spirit as she believed, that there would be a glorious revival, and that two hundred souls would be converted. Some were shocked at the prediction,

and some of the very best people in the church were grieved, for they felt certain that she was doomed to disappointment. She labored for more than a week with little fruit. Her strength began to give way. Her warmest co-workers began to tremble for her. One morning she remarked to the lady at whose residence she was staying: 'I am going into the parlor to settle this church matter with the dear Master. Please do not allow any one to come near me. If I do not come out in time for dinner, do not call me. If I am not with you in time for the afternoon meeting, you may call in the friends. I shall, in the name of God, this day have victory or death.'

It was a bitter cold day in February, and no fire had been kindled in that room all winter, and the frost was thick on the window-panes. She wrapped a large shawl around her, and bowed before God, and presented the promises covered with the blood of the Saviour, and in them there could be no failure. 'Ask and ye shall receive,' stood before her as in characters of living fire. Also, 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.' It was the same voice that awoke slumbering chaos, and new-made worlds teeming with life, glorious and grand. An hour passed—another followed—she had grappled in with God's Word, and in the anguish of her spirit, as she afterwards declared, she could in a certain degree understand

the Scripture, when it describes the Master's agony in the garden, when he sweat great drops of blood. In those hours of the most intense struggle of spirit the great drops of sweat rolled from her brow. The tempter suggested: 'Give it up, God will not give the answer to-day.' 'Then to-day, on this spot, I die,' was her answer. The agony increased. The prayer became a struggle as for life. 'I will not let Thee go. Thy word is truth. Thou hast said 'now is the time.' O, God, now send the answer; *now* my Father, hear me for the sake of souls—for the *two hundred*. Christ has paid the price of their redemption. I plead His merits—I will not yield—I will not move—I will not let go my hold—Thou canst not turn me away. Behold Thine own dear Son pleads—the Spirit intercedes. Give, O give the answer.'

That moment a sweet ripple of peace floated over her soul, and soon shouts of rapture flooded her spirit.

That night twenty seekers bowed at the altar of prayer. In less than five weeks two hundred and thirty-five persons professed faith in Christ.

Thus it ever is 'The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous availeth.'"—*The Harvest and the Reaper*.

Rev. Jesse Kilpatrick, of the Detroit Conference, of the M. E. Church, related to me an experience he passed through, while engaged in a special service. Weeks passed away, and no conversions. He could not rest. At one o'clock, in the night, he arose, dressed himself, and with Bible in hand, went into the woods, knelt in the

snow, under a tree, and with great energy of will, and faith in God, wrestled until eleven o'clock, when the answer came. That night nineteen persons were at the altar, and the work went on until hundreds were saved. Wesley was a wrestling Jacob in prayer. Often, as he came from the closet of devotion, his countenance shone with a halo, bearing luminous evidence that he had been on the mount of vision.

SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE RESULTS OF SUCH PRAYING.

What a wonderful change came over Jacob, indicated in the change of his name from Jacob, the supplanter, the deceiver, to Israel, a prince of God—one who has princely or prevailing power with the Almighty. Likewise, what a wonderful corresponding change took place in Esau. He was coming, with four hundred armed men, with murder in his heart. Now, he meets Jacob as a *brother*, with *love* in his heart. When Jacob recrossed the Jabbok, he found his hating and revengeful brother melted into kisses and friendship. Jacob's blessing overflowed his own heart, and melted Esau's heart. These face-to-face talks with God conquer our enemies. "Peniel of the Old Testament, is Pentecost of the New Testament." With the *power* of God to *conquer* the foe, comes the *fearlessness* of God of the foe.

"Lame as I am, I take the prey ;  
Hell, earth, and sin with ease o'ercome,  
I leap for joy, pursue my way,  
And as a bounding hart fly home."

What a wonderful change comes in the ex-

perience and character of the prevailing Christian and Christian Church. What a wonderful corresponding change takes place in the community of the unsaved.

To prevail once makes it easier to prevail again. A confidence is begotten. If I have prevailed once I may again. I have learned the way to victory.

Mr. Finney, in substance, says: If Christians would cultivate the spirit of prayer, so as to get in the *habit* of persevering in prayer, effectual prayer might be offered at *once*, as well as after praying ever so many times for an object. Until their minds become imbued with the spirit of prayer, they will not keep fixed to one point and push their petition to an issue *on the spot*. Do not think you are prepared to offer prevailing prayer if your feelings will let you pray once for an object and then leave it. Most Christians come up to prevailing prayer by a protracted process. Sometimes to prevail, great will power must be used; at other times so much of the spirit of prayer is given that the believer must cry prevailingly, in order to get relief.

#### WRESTLING JACOB.

"Come, O, thou traveler unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with Thee;  
With Thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.

In vain Thou strugglest to get free,  
I never will unloose my hold;  
Art Thou the Man that died for me?  
The secret of Thy love unfold;  
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,  
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know."

## LECTURE XIV.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER THE PRAYER OF FERVENCY; OR, THE POWER OF INTENSITY.*

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

“The effectual *fervent* prayer of the righteous man availeth much.” Paul says: “Always laboring *fervently* for you in prayers to God.” The prophet Isaiah bewails the state of the Church in this language: “There is none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee.” In another part of the same book God says: “Let him take hold of *My strength*.”

#### IMPORTUNITY AND FERVENCY DISTINCT.

Though usually coupled together in prevailing prayer, importunity and fervency are distinct in nature, and should each be presented separately, as far as possible, that confusion of thought may be avoided, and hence, that we may better understand how to pray and prevail. Importunity in prayer is persevering, unyielding urgency. This may characterize our prayers while we have but little fervency. Fervency in prayer is a glowing warmth, which may intensify into a vehement heat of spirit. Not a vehement heat of our *own* spirits *unaccompanied* by the mighty rush of the intercessional current of the Holy Spirit's prayer, within us, but a fervency imparted to our spirits in proportion as the infinitely fervent Holy Spirit possesses and controls us. There may be this



glowing warmth, intensified into a vehement heat of spirit, yet no unyielding urgency except for the moment. Christ in the garden was *intensely* fervent (fervent as no one else ever has been, or can be), yet He was not persistent. In the event that God's will is *known*, both persistence and fervency are proper and necessary, but in case God's will is not known (as at first when Christ prayed in the garden), there may be, consistently, the most vehement heat of spirit unaccompanied by importunity. Yet the persistency of great purpose and fervency in prayer are so intimately associated and so interlap that it is difficult to treat them separately.

#### REASONS FOR FERVENCY.

Fervency is a prerequisite to success in prayer, because it has an intimate connection with a right, spiritual condition in us. There must be a deep sense of *need*. Moses says "The messengers returned to Jacob, saying: We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was *greatly afraid* and *distressed*, \* \* and Jacob said: O, God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, \* \* I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant. Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother—from the hand of Esau, for I *fear* him, lest he will come and *smite* me, and the mother with the children!" One of two things must be done. Jacob must PREVAIL with God, or he and his family must DIE! The Syro-Phoenician woman *must* prevail, or her child *must* perish! Like-

wise, my brethren, we, too, *must* prevail or sinners will eternally perish in their sins. God designs, by deepening this sense of need, to lead us to the most earnest exercise of our own faith, and its greatest possible development. Answers to our prayers are delayed, often, because our *condition* of heart—of soul, is not such as to enable God, in harmony with His plans, to enable us to exercise the faith necessary. There may be the want of a *realization* of the crying need in the case, and a fervency that will melt away all barriers.

FERVENCY MELTS AWAY THE BARRIERS.

Desire, and love for the salvation of souls must, in some considerable measure, be in proportion to the importance of the object sought.

Mr. Finney tells us: "The case of a certain woman, of whom I read in a revival, made the greatest impression on my mind. She had such an unutterable love and compassion for souls that she actually panted for souls, almost to suffocation. What must be the strength of desire God feels, when His Spirit produces, in Christians, such amazing agony, such throes of soul—such travail! God has chosen the best word to express it. It is *travail*—travail of soul!" Sometimes, that we may prevail in prayer, fervency arises to an agony. Agony in prayer is not always a condition of prevailing prayer, though fervency is. I grant that many an answer has been received by a quiet, but all appropriating faith, yet that faith became all masterful by a *previous* overcoming of all difficulties in its way. Again, striking answers to prayer are seldom realized,

except in answer to *agonizing* prayer. God cares not for the multitude of our prayers, their length, nor their fluency, but for the persistent, white-heat *fervency* of our spirits in prayer. There must be the spirit of *supplication*, a *pouring out* of the *soul*, a spiritual cry, a vehement strife, a powerful wrestling, an irrepressible: "I *must* be answered or *die*!" I speak of this kind of praying from a standpoint of *prevailing intercessional* prayer—prayer for sinners. Paul says: "*Striving (agonizing)* together with me in your prayers to God." Often, to prevail for ourselves or sinners, it is necessary to focus *all* the energies of our being—body, soul and spirit—I mean what I say, *all* the energies of our being, to the last degree possible! We know that a certain degree of heat is necessary to convert cold, hard metal into a fluid, and that all the heat is *lost* if we cease our effort before the metal is brought to the melting point. So, all our labor is lost, in the exercise of faith, for a specific object, if we do not continue in fervent prayer—in increasingly fervent prayer, until, in the furnace of superhuman effort (superhuman, in part at least, because Divinely aided) our spirit and faith, fanned by the intensely fervent and all-helpful intercessional current of the Holy Spirit, our hearts melt into complete oneness with God. In the light of this statement we are to look for an explanation of such Scripture statements as: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;" and: "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." This also explains why so many prayers are not answered. John Knox lay all

night on the floor of his chamber, crying: "Give me Scotland or I die." If we would thus cry give us——or we die, how long before God would answer our prayers? When that dear one in your home was suffering the pangs of death, and almost all hope vanished, how *earnest* was your burdened heart, as it *begged* that Jesus, if it might please Him, would spare to you that precious life! How fervently Elijah prayed for rain. He cast himself upon the earth and put his face between his knees. His whole soul—his whole being was absorbed in the desire of his heart. When we put our faces between our knees—when the *passion* for the rescue of the perishing fills and *masters* our whole being, we are in a condition to focus all our powers at the point of faith in God. When this passion for souls thus possesses us and we utterly *refuse* to let go of God's promise, then always without an exception, the clouds of blessing roll up, and the rain drops of grace begin to fall. We must *stay* on Mt. Carmel with Elijah until the blessing *comes*!

True prayer is not merely calling on God, but it is *taking hold* of God. If we would make peace with God we must *take hold* of His covenant. "By his strength he had power with God and had power over the Angel. He wept and made supplication unto Him, etc." The tears and supplications of Jacob evidently took hold of God and prevailed with Him, and in like manner *we* may take hold of God and secure His blessing. To take hold of God we must take hold of His *covenant*. In this covenant God requires of

us that we shall part with *all* sin and devote ourselves, body and soul, to His service, to remain forever steadfast in our allegiance to Him. This covenant we take hold of when we comprehend it, approve it, believe in it, and determine by the help of God to live according to the terms thereof. To take hold of God we must take hold of His *strength* as well as of His covenant. Christ crucified is termed the power of God and the wisdom of God. We take hold of God's strength when with penitent and believing hearts we take hold of Jesus as our *only* and all-sufficient Saviour. We are to take hold of Him as of one who is about to depart from us, earnestly begging him not to leave us. To take hold of God is to shake off our indifference, seize the promises, and stir ourselves into ceaseless activity. The trumpet calls to war! "O, Israel, stir up thyself! Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O, Zion! Put on thy beautiful garments, O, Jerusalem!" Stir up thyself that thou mayest vanquish the powers of darkness. Infidelity abounds, and what are we doing to stay the tide of rampant ungodliness? How few sigh and cry for the abominations that are done in the land. How few cry with the Psalmist: "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law!" How few join Jeremiah: "O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep, day and night, for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Or, with Christ as He wept over Jerusalem, exclaiming: "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, etc!" O, the power of unyielding prayer! Who

can estimate it! The Lord, our loving Father in heaven, has committed Himself by covenant promise—by oath—to certain specified acts. He would not go back on His word if He could. He lays Himself and all the powers in the universe under tribute to any one of His obedient, trusting children to do for him anything He has promised. He must keep His word. His throne rests upon His Word—His oath. No! no! that is not the way to put it! He must, because it is His blessed *will* and infinite *pleasure* to keep His covenant and fulfill His promise. Out of His unbounded love, He has purposely hedged Himself in on every side by His infallible promises and declarations, that His dependent, loving and trusting child may have the advantage of Him. In His unbounded love, our Heavenly Father has placed a surprising obligation upon His child to hold Him to His promise, that His child may share with Him in the use of that power that is operating in the interests of His kingdom. It is the nature of our Heavenly Father to want to share with His children His *power* as well as His love, peace and joy; and that they should take part, as they actually do, in the government of this world, by first receiving of Divine power, and then using it in the rescue of sinners.

FERVENT PRAYER AVAILETH MUCH.

“The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.” Availeth *how* much? Who can tell? Anything within the compass of prayer—the compass of God’s Word to His children, is as possible to them as to God Himself, because He has pledged Himself to endue

them with power to accomplish His will. I do not speak irreverently or blasphemously (the Word of God bearing me witness), when I say that in His infinite love and tender mercy, our Father in heaven has made Himself the willing servant of his loving child, to accomplish His own blessed will. Is it not written of "God manifest in the flesh," "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of *no* reputation, and took upon Him the form of a SERVANT, and was made in the likeness of sinful men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto *death*, even the death of the *cross* ! \* \* The Son of Man (the Son of God—God Himself), came not to be ministered UNTO, but to MINISTER !" Whose *servant*, and *minister*, my brethren, did the Son of God make *Himself* ? O, how can it be, yet it is true, that the Lord Jesus Christ made Himself your servant and mine, as the loving father joyfully makes *himself* the servant of his darling child. The *Greatest of all* has made Himself *servant of all* ! The loving father takes his darling child in his arms, and says : "My darling, take hold of the reins and drive the horse." The little one takes hold and does the best he can, while the father still holds the reins, and supplements the knowledge and strength of the child. So, our Heavenly Father takes his trusting and loving child in His arms of love and power, and permits him, nay urges him, to take hold, with Him, of the reins of government, and as far as the child pulls the reins agreeably to his

Father's will—in the interests of His Kingdom, his Father's wisdom and power, not only supplement those of His child, but become the *endowment* of His child.

THE LESSON, LARGELY, YET TO BE LEARNED.

Has not the Church, in the main, yet to learn what is the power of prayer, and how to wield this power, to its greatest possible degree? What conception, have the vast, *vast* majority in the Church to-day, of the possibilities of faith? Before it, mountainous difficulties, in the way of God's coming Kingdom, melt and disappear. What of importunate prayer that lays siege to the throne of God and storms heaven with its violence and force! Let Christians but understand, by proper instruction, the great privilege and power of prayer, and realize the great responsibility that is upon them, and they will arise in the strength of their God, and move forward, mightily, to the speedy conquest of the world! Jeremy Taylor graphically says: "Prayer can obtain everything; it can open the windows of heaven, and shut the gates of hell; it can put a holy constraint upon God, and detain an angel till he leave a blessing; it can open the treasures of rain, and soften the iron ribs of rocks till they melt into tears and a flowing river; prayer can unclasp the girdles of the north, saying to a mountain of ice, be thou removed hence and cast into the sea; it can arrest the sun in the midst of his course: and send the soft-winged winds upon our errand, and all those strange things, and secret decrees and unrevealed transactions, which are above the clouds and far



beyond the regions of the stars, shall combine in ministry and advantages for the praying man." It is a mistake to pray, and pray, for years and years, when the answer may be had at *once*. It is our privilege to claim signal victories of faith any day that we live—to push our claims to an issue on the SPOT! We cannot do otherwise and be consistent. Said John Smith, that man of God, so mighty on his knees: "There is no impediment on God's part (in the way of answers to our prayers). It is by justifying God," said he, "that I sting and stimulate myself to contend. It is abomination when men talk as if they were more willing to bless than God. The necessity for wrestling arises from ourselves or Satan, not from God." "Hence," says his biographer, "it left him no alternative but to wrestle and prevail. This was a principle which he never allowed himself or others to call in question."

POWER OF PERSISTENT AND FERVENT PRAYER.

Said the biographer of the Rev. John Smith: "He was called to visit an aged woman, who was dying, in the most miserable circumstances. Her heart seemed shut in despair, and she expressed herself as having made up her mind to be damned. Mr. Smith spent several hours with her, exhorting, praying and reading appropriate portions of Scripture. She repeatedly begged of him to desist, asserting that his efforts were of no use—that she had sinned away her day of grace, and salvation was utterly impossible. He now renewed his exertions. His faith seemed to gather fresh strength, and he wrestled yet more

mightily with God in her behalf. He persevered in the contest of faith with despair, and at last the dying sinner began to yield—to weep and hope that it was yet possible that she might be saved. Shortly after she ventured to cast her soul on Christ. The Holy Spirit witnessed in her heart that God accepted her, and she was filled with gladness and thanksgiving. Shortly afterward she went to join the blood-washed on the other shore.” How many, many souls are eternally lost who might have been saved by such earnest praying! Brethren, how many souls are lost forever who would now be saved, and forever saved, had *we* done more of this kind of praying! When the Holy Spirit creates great desire, no degree of urgency and fervency is out of place. The Christian who knows of no resistance of God’s will in his own heart, regarding anything, may *take hold* of God—yes, *take hold* of God as did Jacob! One day in the town of D. a lady from Boston said to the preacher: “I suppose you believe what you have preached?” He assented. She then proposed that he and another preacher present, unite in prayer two successive days, that God would convert her brother, an influential man and a violent enemy to the Church, and bring him to meeting and to Christ, promising that she would fast and pray for the same object. The proposition came fully up to the terms of the text, and was agreed to. The next afternoon the man was at the meeting and sat in the gallery. When the invitation was given for inquirers, he went down through the entry,

walked up to the altar, and knelt, and was converted.

## ANOTHER VICTORY.

Carvosso, noted for the earnestness and faith of his prayers, tells as follows of the conversion of his children. "I had always prayed for my children, but *now I grasped* the promise, with the hand of faith, and retired daily at special seasons to *put the Lord to His word*. I said nothing of what I felt or did, to anyone but the Searcher of hearts, with whom I wrestled, in an *agony* of prayer." About two weeks after he was called from his work, to pray with his daughter, who became a seeker of Christ. His oldest son was converted at the same time. Regarding his younger son he says: "I laid hold, by faith, on the promise which I had while pleading for my other children. One day while I was wrestling with God, in mighty prayer for him, these words were applied with *power* to my mind: 'There shall not a hoof be left behind.' Soon after he yielded and obtained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." "A dull and careless way of praying for our friends will avail nothing. It may conceal hypocrisy, or strengthen deception concerning our own piety, but it will not move God nor convert a single soul. Our friends know that we are not in earnest and care little for it. But, let us take hold of the matter in a spirit *corresponding* to the *magnitude* of the object to be secured, and there will be a movement!"

## WHAT IS NEEDED.

If parents, who have children unsaved, and wives who have husbands unsaved, would break

down themselves and confess their past mistakes and ask forgiveness, and go to God with broken hearts and contrite spirits, the children and husbands would partake of the same spirit, and they too, would break down before God and be saved. The fact is, that too often, the greatest difficulties in the way of the conversion of children, and unsaved husbands, are to be found in the hearts and lives of parents and wives professing godliness, while their lives, largely, give the lie to their professions. In most cases of this kind, if children and husbands could be associated with consistent and earnest Christians, they would be converted. All the devils in Tartarus do not do as much to hinder many husbands from becoming Christians, as their professedly Christian wives. *Vice versa.* The same is true of many professedly Christian parents and their unsaved children. But a consistent *outer* life alone is not sufficient. They must take hold of the matter with a solicitude, *earnestness*, and *determination, corresponding to the interests involved and the magnitude of the object desired!!* When this is done, is not the desired end *always* reached? The fact is that Christians, very generally, are not willing to deny themselves, confess and put forth the possible and necessary effort.

#### UNWILLING TO DENY THEMSELVES.

How very seldom can Christians be persuaded, even in small numbers, to spend a large part, or the whole, of a night with their Master in prayer that the lost may be saved; even though these lost ones may be members of our own families; though this is very seldom done without reaching the desired result. Parents and others are

unwilling to devote a single day, or night, to the most earnest effort, if need be, to securing the conversion of unsaved loved ones and others.

POWER OF SURCHARGED TRUTH.

It was while Finney, and sometimes others, thus prayed that the heavens opened and the Spirit of God was poured out in such copiousness and power that all hell seemed to be transformed into one malignant, maddened fury, or rather ten thousand furies; when skeptics gnashed their teeth; when the Church, often, under the power of the truth, were first maddened and then borne prone into the dust, in deepest humiliation and most thorough repentance. When sinners, by the hundred, under the bursting, dazzling and convicting light of God's truth—the truth stated with astonishing perspicuity and vehemence, and surcharged with the almighty energies of the Holy Ghost—I say when sinners by the hundred were stunned, then alarmed, and then terrified—many to the verge of absolute despair, or insanity, as within the rushing power of the infuriated cyclone, they cried most piteously for mercy, and rushed into the kingdom of God, as from the closing jaws of hell itself!

WHY DO WE NOT PRAY SO?

Why do not more Christians pray this way *to-day*? Because so many have so little, if any, of the spirit of prayer, and this is because they are so *filled* with the spirit of the *world*. Many who have a measure of the spirit of prayer exercise that measure so little. Many are so full of the spirit of pride and so restrained by the sensitive and precise formalism, which, like a wet

blanket is smothering the life and fervor out of the Church, that they would think themselves *disgraced* if they should pray with the fervency and vehemence of a Paul, a Luther, a Knox, a Whitefield, a Bramwell, or a Finney. O, God, take the bands from our souls; then give us so much of the spirit of prayer that we cannot rest, day or night, till by holy violence we take the kingdom by *force*!

#### A NECESSARY CONDITION.

One of the absolutely necessary conditions of the salvation of lost men and women, is that Christians shall so prevail with God, that the Holy Spirit will so powerfully operate upon sinners, as that they will yield to God and be saved. We *may* so prevail if we *will*. We may prevail *now* if we *will*. Are we *willing* to pay the price. To deny ourselves of food, of sleep, of business, and COMMIT ourselves to victory at any reasonable cost? The *earnestness* of the effort is to be gauged by the *interests at stake*! It is not censoriousness to say that we are not half in earnest about this matter. We have but *very*, VERY little care whether the lost shall be saved or dammed, in comparison with the *importance* of the matter. How long would many church members be willing to deny themselves of food and sleep, if they knew that thereby they could gain ten or twenty thousand dollars? Or, how long would they thus deny themselves to save the imperiled lives of their loved ones? Of course such efforts would not be often needed that our loved ones might be saved; for such effort, made in a genuine faith, would quickly

bring a power that would dispose the unsaved to surrender to God. We must make no provision for failure. We must *see* and *feel* that it is a great *sin* to *fail* to prevail. We are *verily* GUILTY if we *may* prevail and yet do not!

As we continue to pray we receive more and more light regarding our state of heart, and, by continuing, we reach a state of heart in which it is as easy and natural to believe as to breathe. When there is a melting *down* of our spirit. When under the furnace blast of the Holy Ghost and the fervency of our own yielding, and devout spirits, the rigidity of self and sin gives way to a molten condition of our moral nature, as yielding to the touch and helpful operations of the Holy Ghost, as the molten gold is to the forms of the molds into which it is poured. It is while in this molten, pliable, plastic state of absolute limpness in the hand of God, that we can—that we are *enabled* to believe God with *all* our hearts, “*nothing doubting.*” It is then that faith becomes omnipotent! It is then that faith and almightiness become equivalents! It is then the Scriptures: “All things are possible with God,” and “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” practically mean the same thing. This state of heart is reached, and this faith is exercised by “the effectual,  *fervent* prayer of the *righteous* man!”

“O! let all the soul within you,  
For sinner’s sake go abroad,  
Strike! let every nerve and sinew  
Tell on ages—tell on God.”

## LECTURE XV.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, AND CONTINUOUS PRAYER ; OR, INCESSANCY WINS.*

Christ, the fountain of prayer in the soul, would spring up and play forever. The apostle Paul in Ephesians (6 : 18), pens a most remarkable sentence — remarkable for its comprehensiveness, condensation, and masterfulness. Note carefully its words, phrases, and subjects: "Praying always, with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints."

#### POSSIBILITY, DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF UNCEASING PRAYER.

The growing Christian is instant in prayer—prays without ceasing. He whose heart is in sympathy with God will always find time to pray. What God commands is always possible, duty, and privilege.

#### DISCIPLESHIP PERPETUAL.

"Discipleship to Christ is not something that can be put on and taken off, as our convenience, or seeming necessity may require. If we follow at all, we must follow always. If we are Christ's at any time we must be His at all times. Religion is not a thing of Sundays and prayer meetings, of closet hours, and revival seasons, only. It is a business of *every* day, and every hour of the day, of every place and every engagement of life."



## WHAT IS PRAYING ALWAYS?

“Jesus tells us we ought always to pray; and we read of Cornelius, that he prayed to God always. Then he did not only pray when he was in trouble. The burdens of sorrow, of pain and bereavement will often set men to praying, and they are very earnest while the goad yet pricks, and the wound is yet sore, but it is not always night, even in this dark world. Sunny days come, hours of joy and rest; then the prayer that sorrow indited ceases, as the summer brooks stop running when the storm is over. Cornelius was a man of affairs. How could he pray always? When the prayer is the free, spontaneous uplifting of the soul to God, and not the mere repetition of a form, then we can pray always. To pray always it is not necessary to frame the heart’s desires into formal prayers. The fountain shoots its tall column heaven-ward. It would send the silvery shaft, with its musical, sheeny spray, upward forever; but a stone is laid on its mouth and the column falls. Yet the *spring*—the joyful leap—is there, though shut down. Take but away the repressing stone and again it leaps upward with its feathery spray and quivering dart of gladness. So, in the child of God is the fountain of prayer. His heart leaps up to the blessed God. He wakes in the morning to send the beautiful shaft of his petitions and praises to God, but the necessary cares of his home may, sometimes for a short time, lay a stone on the mouth of the fountain and he seems not to pray; but deep within the strong spring and mighty leap of the heart’s desire, wait only for the care

to be taken off and again will the soul go up to its God."

Unceasing prayer implies a life filled with the spirit of prayer. The Holy Spirit is the praying Spirit, and in the heart where He dwells there is unceasing prayer. His intercession is as constant as the fires of the sun. He constantly stirs and incites us to join Him in His intercessions for ourselves and others. As the hidden secret power that points the magnetic needle to the pole unerringly and unceasingly, however the needle itself oscillates amidst disturbing forces; so, the hidden, secret Holy Spirit of God points and leads the consecrated soul to the throne of grace, in prayer, unerringly and unceasingly, however the soul itself oscillates in its erring state amidst the disturbing forces of this world. "Be filled with the Spirit," and constant prayer will be as easy and natural as to breathe. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The never ceasing prayer of faith brings a never ceasing answer. The never ceasing prayer brings a never ceasing incoming of the Holy Ghost, and in ever increasing measure. Never ceasing prayer implies ever increasing consciousness of union and communion with "the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Never ceasing prayer implies ever increasing power in prayer—power with God and with men.

#### NECESSITY OF UNCEASING PRAYER.

First for ourselves, that we may maintain our spiritual life, by a constant and conscious union with God. The Christian is rowing against the tide and only while he plies the oars of prayer

and work, can he hold his own or make headway. If he lay down the oars, he drifts back to from whence he came. How many Christians never get beyond their first experience in the spiritual life? Nay, how many drift *back* of it. Thank God there are those who "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We are such porous creatures that there is a constant waste, or exhaustion, of Divine life and power; and it is only by praying without ceasing that we are able to maintain a supply, and, only by the most strenuous efforts are we enabled to receive a fulness of the Spirit. To use a homely illustration: There is in the sink, in the kitchen, a waste pipe whose capacity is a little smaller than the throat of the pump. Now grasp the handle and work it slowly. Now cease pumping and where has the water gone? Now try it again and pump with all your might, and what follows? In spite of the waste the volume of water, in the sink, increases and rises higher, and finally overflows. So, some Christians pray a little, now and then, but where are their spirituality and power? Others pray fervently, without ceasing, and the heart, not only becomes filled, but overflows. O, for more overflowing hearts!

WARMING BY SOME ONE ELSE'S FIRE.

He only, who constantly receives of God's Spirit and power, in answer to constant prayer, can be a constant blessing to others. And don't you know, that about all the religion many church members enjoy, is what they get while in company with Christians who are constantly

receiving God's blessing, in answer to constant prayer? There is an expenditure, a going out of the spirit and power of grace, to others, and, unless we are constantly replenished we will soon run dry. One gets filled with the Spirit and goes to the service and fills others with the Spirit. They receive of his blessing—of the grace that he possesses. The indifferent believer is blest, and the unbeliever, or sinner, is convicted. How many go to church, cold as death and get a blessing, not because they have believed for it, but, because they partake of the blessing that some one else got, by unceasing and importunate prayer. Put fire and wood into a stove, and, it not only becomes full of heat itself, but it imparts its heat to everything in the room. Every sensitive body *feels* the heat. The more completely you keep the stove full of wood, (the dampers being open) the hotter the fire, and the more completely everything will be warmed. If you fail to replenish the stove with wood, the fire will go out. Everything in the room *passively* receives the heat from the stove. So, the cold Christian, and the unsaved, *passively* receive a blessing from the baptized Christian. Two heaters in a building will keep it warm, much easier than one; a dozen much easier than one. So, two red hot Christians, will keep a church membership warm easier than one; a dozen easier than one; fifty or a hundred easier than one. The *amount* of heat will not be determined by the *number* of heaters, but by the amount of *fire* in them. So, it is not the *number* of Christians in a church that deter-

mines the effectiveness, in saving souls, but the *measure* of the Holy Spirit possessed.

AN ABSORBENT OR GIVER-OFF. WHICH?

Very much depends on enlisting, so far as possible, every member of the church and every Christian in the community. The greater the number enlisted and engaged the easier will the work move. Every member not engaged earnestly, hinders the work instead of helping it, inasmuch as he is an *absorbent*, instead of a giver-off, of the Spirit and power; an absorbent of the vitality and power of those who are alive, which vitality and power would be communicated to sinners outside of the church membership were there no dead or indifferent members in the church. The pastor, or evangelist, who best knows how to enlist the *entire* membership of the church, or churches, not only makes the work easy for himself, but in that proportion increases the probabilities of success. And right here lies not only one great reason why some evangelists (Moody and others) desire union services, but one great *cause* of their success, other things being equal. Fire a heater red hot and run the thermometer up to 100, and then bring in a dozen or twenty great blocks of ice, and how quickly the temperature will fall. But, fire a dozen or twenty heaters red hot, and run the temperature up to 100 and bring in *one* block of ice and just see it melt away, while there is hardly a perceptible falling of the temperature. The pastor may be full of faith and the Holy Ghost, but if between him and the unsaved are twenty, fifty, or a hundred cold church members,

they will absorb almost all the spiritual power that he throws off, so that but little will reach the unsaved. It is like trying to shoot a bear through a two-inch oak plank. O, my brethren, in the future which will we be, *absorbents* of the vitality of other Christians, or *givers-off* of vitality and spiritual power ?

NOT BY "FITS AND STARTS."

Continuous prayer is necessary to the greatest possible development of faith. Prayer is the exercise of faith, and of course the more constant and fervent prayer is, the more rapid the development of faith, and the mightier it becomes.

UNCEASING PRAYER AND CHARACTER.

Unceasing prayer is necessary to the greatest possible development of Christian character. God is always ready to bestow real good, but He sees best to bestow great blessings when the graces are more fully matured and the character more fully developed ; and in order to this perfection of the graces, and development of the character, there must be unceasing prayer. Of course there are other things necessary. God purposes for us the highest development of character. He has this constantly in view : that character which determines our moral standing, both in time and eternity. Such character is sustained, only by a vital union with Christ ; and this union with Christ is sustained, mainly, by a living faith, as the prime condition, exercised by constant prayer. *Such* character is the *pressing want* of *this world*, and is the natural product of fellowship with God in prayer. This union makes us like our Lord. Gradually we receive His image by our devotional

habits, by our fervent importunities at the mercy seat, and by a free reception of the Holy Spirit, as our Intercessor and Sanctifier. Who has not realized that the final answer to prayer given after days or weeks of continuous prayer is all the richer, in its blessing, and that our Christian character is more fully developed? He who has the most fully developed character has most power with God in prayer, other things being equal. This development is reached by unceasing prayer. Hence, the greatest victories of faith are won by those who continue most constantly in prayer. How wonderful the privilege, and the ability to pray without ceasing, at all times and under all circumstances!

#### TRANSFORMING POWER OF CONSTANT PRAYER.

The Rev. W. C. Griffeth relates the following from personal knowledge: "An old man, who, for fifty years, has been serving the Lord, recently rose in class meeting and told his religious history. It was in the presence of some who had often expressed a wish to be like him. Everybody in town revered and honored him, and many of the irreligious say: 'If we could be as good as he is we would like to be Christians.' With radiant face, and warm heart, he told of his conversion, and then, of the temptations that came upon him. He was obliged to work hard from daylight until dark, but as soon as supper was over, he hurried into the depths of the forest, and, every night, he would thus engage in prayer; sometimes until eleven o'clock. That was his *daily* habit, and said he: 'Brethren, from *daily*

communion with God, I have derived *all* my strength, *all* my hope, and *all* my joy!"

THE DIVINE ARTIST AND HIS SUBJECT.

God, in Christ, appears to us in the gospel glass. In His *words* He manifests Himself. The Word is a painting, by the Divine artist—the Holy Ghost. The *central* figure of this picture, is "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." As we gaze upon this picture we are transformed into the likeness of its *central* figure. Face to face talks with God in prayer, and holy communion with Him in the Word, are acts of beholding "God manifest in the flesh," by which we come to love Him and serve Him; by which, also, we are transformed into His likeness. Not only bye-and-bye shall we be like Him, because we shall *see* Him as He is, but we *may* be like Him *here*, and *now*, if we will more *constantly* behold Him by faith.

THE SAILOR AND THE PICTURE OF THE CHRIST.

The following is stated by Rev. B. Fay Mills: "Some of you have seen the great picture that was painted by Muncakazy, of the Christ. That picture was being exhibited in Canada, at Toronto, I think, and there came a wild, rough, wicked sailor to see it. He entered the room, at the time of day when there were no others there, and, paying his money to the woman who sat inside the room, he came in and stood for a moment looking at the canvas as though he would glance at it and go away. But as he looked he could not turn. He stood there with his eyes fixed on the central figure of majesty and love. In a few minutes he took off his hat



and let it fall on the floor. After a few minutes more he sat down upon a seat, and there he reached down and picked up a book that described the picture, and began to read, and every few seconds his eyes would turn towards the canvas, and toward the picture of Christ. The lady who sat by the door, saw him lift up his hand and wipe away the tears. Still he sat, till five, ten, fifteen, sixty minutes went away; and still the man sat there, as though he could not stir. At last he rose, and, coming softly and reverently toward the door, he hesitated, to take one last look, and said to the woman, who sat there: 'Madam, I am a rough, wicked sailor. I have never believed in Christ; I have never used His name except in an oath, but I have a Christian mother, and my old mother begged me to-day, before I went to sea, to go and look at the picture of the Christ. To oblige her I said I would come. I did not believe that anyone believed in Christ; but as I have looked at that form, and that face, I have thought that some man must have believed in Him, and it has touched me, and I have come to believe in Him, too. I am going out from this time to be a believer in Jesus Christ—and a follower of Him.'" O, that we may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE PRAYER IS UNSELFISH.

Unceasing prayer is necessary for the sake of others, in and out of the Church. Christ's prayers had chief reference to this work—to others. In this we should follow His example. It is to be feared, not that we pray too much for ourselves,

but that we do not pray enough for others. "Prayers and intercessions for all men," are enjoined by the Word. We must not be content with general supplication. Our prayers must be specific. We must pray for individuals. Only while we continue in earnest prayer for others, saints and sinners, will the Holy Spirit continue to convict the sinner, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. It is necessary to reach the greatest possible results, that we continue in the most earnest prayer possible ; as Paul says (Col. 4:12): "*Always* laboring fervently for you in prayer." Christ continued in prayer, sometimes all night long. Why? I answer, because necessary. If it had not been necessary, He would not have done it. If Christ needed to pray always in order to accomplish His work, how much more is it necessary for us, who are so imperfect. Christ's life of unceasing prayer is our prayer pattern. O, to *continue* in the *priestly* office, to "pray without ceasing."

A MAN OF PRAYER.

An illustrious example of constancy and power in prayer, we find in John Wesley. "It is said that 'as a matter of habit and rule John Wesley's ordinary private praying consumed two hours a day.' At times he would gather his company and pray all night, or till the power of God came down. Nothing was considered too great or too small to take to the Lord. Seized with a pain in the midst of his preaching, so that he could not speak, 'I know my remedy,' he says, and immediately kneeled down. In a moment the pain was gone and the voice of the Lord cried aloud

to sinners. Being seized with a pain, fever and cough, so that he could scarcely speak, 'I called on Jesus aloud to increase my faith. While I was speaking my pain vanished away, my fever left me, and my bodily strength returned.'

The elements, as well as sickness, were often in his way, and prayer removed the hindrances. 'Just as I began to preach the sun broke out and shone exceedingly hot on my head. I found if it continued I should not be able to speak long, and I lifted up my heart to God. In a minute or two it was covered with clouds which continued till the service was over.' And he says, 'Let any one who please call this chance, I call it an answer to prayer.' It was raining, and Wesley and his congregation were crowded out of the church, and the rain ceased the moment they came out. He says in regard to this incident, 'How many proofs must we have that there is no petition too little, any more than too great for God to grant.'

Wesley moved things mightily because he moved God mightily. He became the prince of evangelists, because he was the prince of prayers. He stirred the world with the fire of his zeal, because he had stirred heaven by the fire of his prayers. His pleas had access to men's consciences, because they had access to God. If more men prayed as John Wesley prayed, there would be more of John Wesley's thoroughly spiritual work done."

Great diligence is necessary to maintain the spirit of prayer. "Praying *always* with all prayer, etc." Watching thereunto with *perseverance*. Watch

thereunto with *all* perseverance. Brethren, the *constant* presence in the heart, of the *ever* praying Spirit of God, is conditioned on *never* ceasing obedience to God. O, how great the privilege, of praying God's blessing, in saving power, on one another, on the community, on the nation, and on the world!

“ Pray, without ceasing, pray,  
Your Captain gives the word.  
His summons cheerfully obey,  
And call upon the Lord.  
To God your every want  
In instant prayer display;  
Pray always; pray, and never faint;  
Pray, without ceasing, pray.  
  
I want a heart to pray,  
To pray and never cease;  
Never to murmur at Thy stay,  
Or wish my sufferings less,  
This blessing, above all,  
Always to pray, I want;  
Out of the deep on Thee to call,  
And never, never faint.”

## LECTURE XVI.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND POWER; OR, THE POWER OF PRAYER IS THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.*

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

When Christ was about to ascend to heaven He said to His disciples (Luke 24:49): "And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye \* \* until ye be endued with power from on high." Again (Acts 1:8): "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Luke states, in Acts (4:31): "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the word of God with boldness (v 33), \* \* and with *great power* gave the apostles witness, of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

#### AN ERROR.

The Rev. B. Fay Mills, in his booklet: "Power From on High," asks regarding the nature of this power: "What is it?" and answers, "It is nothing less than the life of God, manifested through human character." Does Mr. Mills mean to teach that life and power are the same thing? Are God's life and power the same thing? Do not the Scriptures, in a multitude of instances, distinguish between the *life* and *power* of God? If the disciples were to be endued with the *life* of God, why did not Christ say: "Tarry ye until

ye be endued with *life* from on high?" and, "ye shall receive *life* from on high?" Why did not Luke say: "And with great *life* gave the apostles witness?" Why did not the apostle say: "Our gospel came in *life*" instead of "in *power*?" Surely, Mr. Mills, or the Word of God, is in error.

#### WHAT IS THIS POWER?

I answer, the energy of the Holy Ghost—the energy of God. In our world, electricity is an everywhere present power; yet its energy is seldom felt. "But, bring the surcharged cloud in contact with a suitable conductor, and then the vivid flash of fire, and the deep roar of heaven's artillery will symbolize the" infinite power of the everywhere present Holy Ghost, who, on the day of Pentecost, not only tipped the believer's brow with fire, and liberated his tongue, but surcharged him with almighty power.

Here we should distinguish between power, stimulating to prayer and helping to believe, and power operating upon, and through us, in saving sinners.

#### POWER NEEDED FOR SOUL WINNING.

"The sacred history of the day of Pentecost teaches what Christ meant by the enduement with power from on high. The disciples were Christians, but, unable to perform successfully the work before them, until power from on high should fit them for it. Hence, the absolute dependence of the Church on Divine, supernatural power for soul winning. The might of human power, intellect, eloquence, education, numbers, wealth and position, sanctified, may be made auxiliary, but these alone are utterly incompe-

tent to reach the moral nature and give the disposition to love and obey the truth. The Holy Spirit, alone, can do this, by sinking the truth through the intellect into the conscience and affections. Truth may sparkle like an icicle, and be just as cold, until by the Spirit it becomes 'spirit' and 'life' to the soul." By the endowment with power Christ meant that the disciples should be invested and clothed upon, with the energy of God, as circumstances required, and their faith received. It also qualifies the Christian to witness unto Jesus with an all-powerful testimony. This was the live coal from off the altar that purged the unclean lips of Isaiah and made him eloquent for God and caused him to answer: "Here am I, send me." O! I don't wonder that Christians so often say: "I can't!" How little are we qualified for the work of soul saving—for testifying unto Jesus with a testimony that will not be resisted!

#### HOW MAY I GET THIS POWER?

It seems to me that the answer to this question, given by the Rev. B. Fay Mills, in his "Power From on High," is not only confusing, but unscriptural. His words are: "We cannot get it. No man ever possessed it. No man ever owned it. No man ever used it. It is a question, not of getting *power*, but of God getting *us*; not of our using God, but of God using us. Some have said that the disciples had to wait ten days, and, that they were ten days in which they were being filled with the Holy Ghost. This is a mistake. They were not waiting ten days to be filled. They were waiting to be emptied."

Is it not a little, nay, *very* remarkable, that the Bible in its statements on this truly vital subject, has been so *misleading*? There is a great deal said by a certain class of teachers, about our first being *emptied*, before we can be filled; so that the conviction is produced, that the heart must first be so emptied of sin, as to be, for a time, a moral vacuum, and then it may be filled with the Holy Ghost. "We cannot get it," says Mr. Mills. I answer if we cannot *get* it we cannot *receive* it. But Christ says: "Ye shall *receive* power." Christ said: "*Receive* ye the Holy Ghost." Did they *receive* the Holy Ghost, and not *get* Him? "And they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost." Could they be *filled* with the Holy Ghost and not *get* Him? "No man," again says Mr. M., "ever possessed it." I ask how can we *receive* power, in the gospel sense, and not possess it? "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and "Stephen was full of faith and power." How could they be *filled* with the Holy Ghost and power, and not *possess* the Holy Ghost and power? Christ said: "I will pray the Father and He shall *give* you another Comforter." Does not every fully consecrated believer *possess* God's wonderful Gift? "He shall *give* you another Comforter." The Word says: "It is He that *giveth* thee power." Can a person *receive* a *gift* and not *possess* it?

In an absolute sense, no man ever possessed anything—not even himself. Primarily, all power belonged to God. Hence, all power, inherent in, or received by the creatures of God, is delegated. Yet, creatures of God *possess* and *own* power, though delegated, as certainly and absolutely as



God Himself possesses and owns power ; simply because God has *unconditionally* and *eternally* endued certain of his creatures with power. Angels, men and devils, *possess*, and will *forever* possess, unconditionally, intellectual power. Man, with all other physical beings, has *received* and *possesses* physical power, unconditionally ; though limited as to degree and duration. All power to do *wrong* is of God, as certainly as all power to do right is of God. The power by which all crimes—all sins committed by men and devils—is of God. It is for men, or devils, to determine whether they will use this power for good or evil. All such power is not only *received* and *possessed*, but "*owned*" by these creatures. It is an independent power, not absolutely, for it is constantly and will be eternally communicated by God. Yet God has *chosen*, unconditionally and eternally, to communicate this power.

Now the question is : Do believers, who are "endued with power from on high," not only *receive*, but *possess* it ? As far as the actual expenditure of power is concerned, *primarily*, all power in the watch inheres in the mainspring, *i. e.*, the hairspring cannot do its work without being *moved* by the mainspring. Yet it is equally true that there *is a power* in the hairspring, and the mainspring *cannot* do its work without the power—the assistance of the hairspring. But does not the hairspring *receive*, *possess* and *use* the power of the mainspring while in its proper relations to the mainspring ? They mutually interact. So, primarily, all power in the universe inheres in God. Yet, God communicates of His

power to His creatures, physical, intellectual and moral. He does this unconditionally. But, while *spiritual* power, primarily, belongs to God only, it is communicated conditionally in this world. Its communication and retention are conditioned on the obedience of man. While this spiritual power is received, possessed and used *voluntarily* (not *passively*, as the hairspring,) and conditionally; yet it is *received, possessed, owned and used*, just as certainly as physical, intellectual or moral power is received, possessed, owned and used. "He *giveth* power (spiritual) to His people." "I am *full* of power by the Spirit." (Mi. 3:8). Yes, this power is *given* to be *used* as *we will*, in *harmony* with *God's will*.

AGAIN MR. MILLS SAYS:

"No man ever *used* it." This power is *given* to us, we *receive* it and *possess* it. Not to be *used*? If not, what does God *give* it for? *Why* do we *receive* it? Did not the disciples of Christ use this power? J. F. and B. in their commentary say: "These words (of Peter) uttered with supernatural power, (to the lame man) doubtless *begat*, etc." Did not Peter *use* this power? In Acts, it is stated: "And with *great* power gave the apostles *witness*, etc." How could the apostles *witness* to the resurrection of Christ, "with great power" and yet not *use* that power? Jesus said, "And greater works than these (that I do) shall *ye* do." How did they do greater works than their Master without *using* the same power by which He did His works? "By the hand of the apostles were many (miraculous) signs and wonders wrought." How did the *apostles*

work signs and wonders but by *using* the power with which they were "filled?"

NOT WAITING TO BE FILLED?

Mr. Mills still again says: "They (the disciples) were not waiting ten days to be *filled*. They were waiting to be *emptied*." I ask can sin and self go out, except as the Holy Spirit comes in. Is not the Holy Spirit the great Agent who does the emptying? Does He stand off and *outside* of a human heart, when he empties it, or (as one empties an uncleanly house of its filth, *enters* it that he may *empty* it) does he *enter* the unclean heart that He may *empty* it, in order that He may fill it? How can He empty a heart without *entering it*? Does not the *filling* go on, in exact ratio, as the *emptying* goes on? When the heart is emptied of the last remains of sin, is it not instantly completely filled with the Spirit? Is there such a thing as a moral vacuum? How are you going to get the darkness *out* of the room unless you *first let in the light*? Is not the room *emptied* of darkness by *filling* it with light? *Let in the light* and how long will it be till the darkness goes out? *Keep out* the light and how are you going to empty the room of darkness? How can the darkness go out except it be *driven* out by the *incoming and filling light*? Is not the light the agent—and the only agent—whose entrance empties the room of its darkness? In other words, is not the Holy Spirit the Agent—and the only Agent—whose enlightening, vivifying, purifying and empowering *entrance* into a human heart empties it of its moral impurity? The child in the darkness cries out to the nurse;

"I'm a'traid in the dark! Bring in the light!" The nurse, in her wisdom, exclaims: "Empty your room of darkness, and then I'll take in the light!" Is there a hint, within the lids of God's Book, that we are not to wait, that we may be filled with the Holy Ghost and power, but rather that we are to wait to be emptied? Are we not, in the Bible, instructed and encouraged to wait for the baptism of, and filling with, the Holy Ghost and power? Of course faith implies that we renounce all sin, so that the Holy Spirit, as we receive Him, may not only empty us; but, *as* He empties us, may also *fill* us with Himself—His *light, life, purity and power!* In Luke (24:29) Christ said to His disciples: "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you." "But tarry ye." To be emptied? Just the reverse—*filled!* "Tarry ye \* \* until ye be *endued* (not *emptied*) with power from on high." After Christ's resurrection He repeats His instruction and injunction, as is stated in Acts (1:4, 5, 8): "And being assembled together with them, commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait (to be emptied? O! for more attention to the *Word*, and less to our *pet* theories) for the promise of the Father (the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as foretold by Joel, to fill and empower His disciples), which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Now let us follow these instructed disciples, from the mount of ascension to that "upper room," where "these all continued with one accord in

prayer (not asking that something be *taken from* them but that something be *given* them), and supplications, etc." "And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all, with one accord, in one place, and suddenly there came (emptiness? O, no! There is no such thing as a human heart being *empty*) a sound from heaven, as of a mighty, rushing wind, and it *filled* all the house where they were sitting, and, there appeared unto them (emptiness? No! no! but just what they had been waiting for) cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all (emptied? no! no!) *filled* with the Holy Ghost, etc." The way Mr. Mills phrases his statement we may legitimately infer, I think, that the primal and crowning *direct* end of their waiting—that they had *chiefly* in mind—was that they might be *emptied*. Surely, no one can legitimately draw any such conclusion from the plain Bible statement of the matter. But Mr. M. so magnifies (as too many of us are apt to do) before his eye, and that of others, his pet thought, as to hide from view the mighty Sun of truth, whose floods of light and life, of purity and power, we are waiting to receive, and which, alone, by coming *into* our hearts can empty us of all sin and fill us with God. Then the thing to wait for is, not to be *emptied*, but *filled*!—*filled* that we *may* be emptied! The apostle does not enjoin: "Be *emptied* of sin;" "But, be *filled* with the Spirit." Therefore, if you want to be emptied of all sin, with a surrendered will and believing heart, ask to "be *filled* with the Spirit."

In keeping with the foregoing remarks, on

Mr. Mills' statements, Mr. Wesley, in his sermon on "Sin in Believers," very pointedly asks : " But, can Christ be in the same heart where sin is ? " Then answers : " Undoubtedly He can ; otherwise it could never be saved therefrom. Where the sickness is : ' Carrying on His work within, striving till He cast out sin.' "

These extended remarks opposing Mr. Mills' statements, have been made because of the prevalence and growth of the error advanced.

#### WHAT I WANT.

I have perfect sympathy with the last four, but none with the first four lines, of the following stanza, by Geo. McDonald :

" Lord, might I be but as a saw,  
A plane, a chisel in Thy hand !  
No, Lord I take it back in awe—  
Such prayer for me is far too grand.  
I pray, O, Master, let me lie  
As on Thy bench, the favored wood  
Thy saw, Thy plane, Thy chisel ply,  
And work me into something good."

I want, above all things, that my Divine Master shall first " work me into something good," and then put His power within me, and send me out, " a saw," in His hand, to sever the Church from the world : a mallet and " chisel," in His hands, to let out the angel He has put in every human being, but hidden and buried away, under the accretions of a sinful life ; and a " plane " in His hand to cut away all unholy tempers and tendencies from the redeemed human soul. God works by means and agencies ! As a rule by holy and Divinely empowered agencies ; but,

agencies most perfectly in harmony with the teachings of *His Word*!

WHAT FOLLOWS A WANT OF THIS POWER?

The want of this power is the great cause of multitudes of abortive special efforts. In second Kings (19 : 3), Hezekiah laments : "The children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth." The Church is the mother of those born into the kingdom of God's grace. "Salvation must come out of Zion." God has inaugurated the Church for the purpose of evangelizing the world. The unsaved are the spiritually *unborn*. They have no power to bring themselves into the kingdom of grace. The only power that can deliver them, is the power of God. But this power comes through the Church. With the degree of this power, that she *may* have, the Church may, at any time, deliver souls into the kingdom. When this power came on the Church at Jerusalem, three thousand were born in a single day; and we read further : "There were *daily* added to the Church such as should be saved." Thousands of instances are on record, to the effect, that when the Church received sufficient power to bring spiritually unborn souls into the kingdom of grace, they always have been saved. This is not without the conjoint action of the Church and the sinner. But the sinner's understanding may be so enlightened, and his conscience so aroused to a realization of his guilt and peril, by the Holy Ghost, in answer to prayer, that he will freely, and from choice, "lay hold upon the hope set before him in the gospel." Under ordinary circumstances

the unsaved are utterly indisposed to come to Christ, independently of the operations of the Holy Ghost, which the spiritual birth labor, on the part of the Church, implies. That is, they have no disposition to come to Christ until they are aroused to a sense of their lost condition; and without this disposition they cannot come. The birth of souls into the kingdom of grace is preceded, and attended, by birth labor, on the part of some Christian, or Christians. In Galatians (4:19) Paul says: "My little children, of whom I *travail in birth* again, until Christ be formed in you." A widowed mother prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of her wicked, rebellious son. He willfully resisted, though he knew that his persistent wickedness was killing his mother. The battle waxed hotter, and to rid himself of the influence of his mother's prayers, he left home. She prevailed with God, and then her Father took her home. The son felt that his sins had killed his mother. His heart was broken. He returned home by the cemetery and, prone on the newly-made grave, surrendered and was saved. This soul-birth labor will always come upon Christians, when they will arouse themselves to an understanding of their responsibility, and the truly alarming and awful peril of sinners. It is by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost only, that souls are brought to the birth. The Holy Ghost never thus operates, except in answer to the prayer of faith. God, by the pen of Isaiah (66:9) says: "Shall I (by the operations of My Spirit) bring to the birth (in answer to prayer) and shall I not cause to bring forth?"



There may be strength to "bring to the birth," and not enough "to bring forth." The correctness of this statement may be illustrated by an incident, related to me, by a minister of the Gospel. When pastor of a certain charge he conducted a special meeting of three weeks continuance. During this time twenty persons came forward, as seekers, night after night. Yet, not even one was converted. Gradually, conviction wore away and they returned to their former sinful ways. What was wanting? Who were responsible? Christians were *powerless* to help souls into the kingdom of grace! The travail of soul, of Christians is always an infallible evidence that they may prevail with God in behalf of the person or persons, for whom they are burdened.

#### DELIVERANCE OR DEATH.

The Church must receive added strength (power) or sinners, the spiritually unborn, will die eternally. The Church must receive added strength (power) or she *herself* must die. The unborn infant must be delivered or the mother *must* die. This is just as true in grace as in nature. This is true of fruitless attempts at a revival. A Church will be strong and healthful in proportion to the number saved. How full of vitality a Church is, after a genuine and powerful revival!

#### SOUL-BIRTH LABOR.

How much travail of soul has the Church in —? When the Church is burdened for souls, as a sister, who prevailed for her husband, said to me: "I thought I would literally die," soul-birth labor is upon her, and souls may "be born

again." "For shall I bring *to* the birth, and shall I not *cause* to bring forth, saith the Lord?" O, how assuring, my brethren, is this, "*Thus* saith the Lord!" We see the situation, and our relations, and obligations to God and to our unsaved neighbors. By the help of God will we meet these obligations?

#### WHAT FOLLOWS ITS RECEPTION?

Let the Christian wait for this power until it is received, and, as Dr. Mahan says: "There will be in the actions and manifestations of that mind, a distinctively conceivable, but indescribable something, which constitutes what the Scriptures call 'An unction from the Holy One.' The mind will have a vision of things, unseen and eternal, unlike that possessed by other men." When that person speaks of God, of heaven, of hell, of time, of eternity, the promises: "The unsearchable riches of Christ," and of the judgment, "There will be a depth of meaning attached to such words which to our minds they never had before. They come from His lips as if new-coined from the mint of heaven. A grace is poured from those lips which moves, awes, attracts, and which melts our own hearts into a sympathy with that of the speaker. This is power, or unction, or 'the anointing.'"

#### WHO MAY HAVE THIS POWER?

In a holiness conference, in England, a minister from Australia stated the following, related to him in a letter, written him by a pastor concerning a servant girl: "The fact which deeply impressed me," said the minister, "when I heard that young woman speak, whether in prayer meeting, or in

Sunday School, or to individuals, upon the subject of religion, was, that she was possessed of a power that I had not. So impressed did I at length become with the fact, that I went to her and asked her to disclose to me the secret of that Divine power with which she was so manifestly possessed. She did so, and, under the convictions induced, I sought and obtained the same power.

“Under this enduement of power from on high I began to preach to the people; as a result, there have already been upward of seven hundred conversions, and the work is still going forward. All is attributable to the influence of this domestic, and that, through the power that rests upon her.” This “unction” comes in the baptism of the Holy Ghost—“the anointing which ye have received; the same anointing which teacheth you all things.”

ALL SHOULD TARRY FOR THIS POWER.

I have no doubt that it would be infinitely better for the world, if powerless professors would suspend all other efforts, in every other direction, till with “strong crying and tears,” they shall have waited on the Lord and received this unction. How few stalwart souls in the Church—moral giants, who can put their arms under a whole community, and lift it God-ward! The land might be full of these giants. How the hearts broke, and the stubborn wills surrendered, under the all powerful testimony of Peter, *backed* by a Church, “*ALL filled with the Holy Ghost !!*”

GREAT PRAYING NEEDED.

The power of sin and Satan, over the sinner,

is alarming. The power of the Holy Ghost, only, can break this influence, and free the poor sinner to the degree, that he can will to come to Christ. (of course no sinner is always without this help of the Spirit.) How easy to persuade sinners to come to Christ when the power of sin, in a human heart, is thus smitten. "Thy people shall be *willing* in the day of Thy *power*." If we would do more pleading with *God* we would not have to do so much pleading with *men*. It is not so much great preaching, that we need, as great *praying*! It is *power*, POWER, POWER! that we need, accompanied by love and hope.

#### WHAT WE ARE PRAYING FOR.

Said Dr. Alexander, of Scotland: "The influence of the Holy Spirit of God is exceedingly powerful. We ask something mighty, and revolutionizing! It is omnipotence we are praying for! A wicked city, a wicked world, will yield to no inferior strength. What an encouragement! 'With the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength!' It is as applicable to a revival as to the building of the temple. 'Not by might nor by power, but by *My Spirit*, saith the Lord of hosts!' Let Christians no longer despair of the conversion of high-handed sinners; even the *vilest* of the vile, in our filthiest, bloodiest dens; as if we expected in answer to our prayers, only some weak, half-way operation! 'Our Gospel,' says the apostle, 'came not unto you in *word* only, but also in *power*, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' This is our ground of hope, when the ministers of the Word proclaim the glad tidings, that the preaching may be in demonstration of the Spirit and

of *power*. God grant us deliverance from our *unbelief*, as to the power of the Holy Spirit in giving efficacy to the truth! Brethren, we must pray as we have never prayed! Our want of success is due to our *coldness* of desire and *niggardliness* of request! We are not straitened in God, but, in our own low, slender conceptions and hopes. We have not, because we ask not. If we were under a deep and solemn impression of the Divine power, bounty and faithfulness, how 'one would chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.' The lesson a revival should teach us, is the duty of being *instant* in supplication for the larger, and more glorious, effusion of the Holy Spirit. Acting on this we should behold new marvels of saving power in the place of prayer."

IF BUT ONE POSSESSES THIS POWER, THEN WHAT?

If but Peter, of all the disciples, had received this power, would not the three thousand have been saved just the same? I answer, certainly not! If a body, weighing a ton, is to be lifted, can one person lift it as easily as twenty? If two possess this power, the power to save is twice that if but one possess it—if ten, ten times the power, etc. This explains why the vast multitude—three thousand—were converted on the day of Pentecost. The "one hundred and twenty" "were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and hence, they were *all* filled with power! What if *all* the members of this Church were *full* of the Holy Ghost and power! Nothing would be able to stand before us!

## WILL WE HAVE THIS POWER?

Nay, my brethren, we *must* have it! It is not optional. We must not allow it to be an open question. The crying peril of perishing men and women about us beseeches us to "*tarry!*" The despairing wail of the lost, who might have been saved if the Church had had this power, entreats us; "*TARRY!*" Down, from the dome of the skies, comes thundering the command of Him who died to redeem the lost: "*TARRY!*"

## CRIMINAL INDIFFERENCE.

There must be an arousalment from our criminal stupor, and a realization of our accountability to God. *The value of a human soul is the measure of our responsibility!* Will we obey the command of the Head of the Church *here and now*, or, as heretofore, neglect and *disobey* it? To *disobey* is to *sin*—to add sin to sin! To obey is to receive *power* from God, and have power with men. Brethren, why haven't we this power? It is because we have been *criminally* indifferent to the Master's command. It is because we have been, largely, criminally indifferent as to whether souls shall be eternally saved or eternally damned! In many instances these unsaved ones are right in our own families! Our *guilt* is in proportion to our *neglect*! There must be complete and instant obedience to the Master's command: "*Tarry!*" There must be thorough and immediate repentance of our sin of indifference! Divine forgiveness must be sought and obtained at *once!*

"Come, Holy Spirit, raise our songs  
To reach the wonders of that day,  
When, with Thy fiery cloven tongues  
Thou didst such glorious scenes display."

## LECTURE XVII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND POWER; OR, THE MEASURE AND RESULTS OF POWER.*

FOR WHAT PURPOSE IS POWER GIVEN?

God gives us this power to use in saving others. A fully sanctified and empowered Christian, and no other, is fully prepared to do God's work—to be a powerful witness unto Christ. "If a man therefore purge himself from these (and tarry until endued with power from on high), he shall be a vessel unto honor, meet for the Master's use, and *prepared* unto *every* good work." The Angel said to Jacob, after the victory of his faith: "Thou hast power with God and with men and hast prevailed." Or, perhaps, more correctly: "Thou hast power with *God* and with *men* shalt thou *also prevail*." Esau's heart was broken and the lives of Jacob and his company were preserved. Spurgeon forcefully says: "He who has power with God for men, has power with men for God." O, for a holy ambition—a holy hunger to possess power with God and with men: power with Paul to preach the Gospel, who says: "By the *power* of the *Spirit* of God I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." The Church must first get filled with the Spirit and then fill others. The minister's *business* is to *wait* upon God and receive the Divine blessing and then go into the pulpit, and homes, and shops, and offices and bless the people.

"GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YE DO."

Jesus said to his disciples, referring to the works he had done: "And greater works than these shall *ye* do, because I go unto My Father," to send the Holy Ghost to *strengthen* them with might in the inner man—to endue them with power. What wonderful works were performed by the apostles! Luke states (Acts 5:12,14-16): "By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people \* \* and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes, both of men and women, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that, at the least, the *shadow* of Peter, passing by, might overshadow some of them." There was more power in the mere shadow of Peter than in many a whole Church to-day! There is a sense in which the Christian, endued with Divine power, converts the sinner. We read in James (5:20): "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Men and women may be counted by the hundred who, by the power of the Holy Ghost upon them, and strengthening them, have turned tens of thousands to Christ.

"Greater works than these shall *ye* do." Greater works than to raise the dead, hush the thundering tempest and still the maddened sea. To prevail with God-hating and defiant rebels against the government of the Almighty, so that sinners will lay down their weapons of warfare



and submit to the claims of God, and penitently plead for mercy and pardon in Christ's name, is a greater work than to resurrect a thousand dead bodies. As far as getting the people saved went (that was not Christ's *great* mission while on earth). Christ's ministry seemed almost a failure. But see, on the day of Pentecost, when Peter witnessed of Christ in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," the Holy Ghost bringing all things to his remembrance, whatsoever the prophets and Christ had said unto him; how sinners by the thousand were converted! Christ himself never moved the multitude so, and brought thousands to repentance and salvation in a single day.

#### WHAT DEGREE OF POWER IS POSSIBLE?

"To spiritually illuminated readers of the Scriptures, nothing is clearer than that believers may be so perfected in their faith, by the incoming of the Comforter, and so kept in this state, by His constant indwelling, that they can call to their aid all power in heaven and in earth to accomplish any work to which they are Divinely appointed. St. Paul's: 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,' are strong, bold words. They recall that other wonderful saying: 'All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth.' They deliberately assert the possession of omnipotence for the doing of God's will. St. Paul's was a typical case. This omnipotence the Christian may, and should possess. St. Paul's claim to the possession of it was no thoughtless boast. It was not Paul, fresh from the hands of Ananias, at Damascus, but Paul in

Nero's prison, at Rome. The apostle's experience was that of the noble army drawn up, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. The secret of their constancy under trial, and that triumph over all their foes, was, that out of *weakness* they were *made strong*.' This marvelous strength is not a monopoly of apostles and martyrs. It is open to all that 'wait upon the Lord,' and so 'renew their strength,' as that they may mount upward, as the eagle, on untiring wing; may run without weariness, and walk and not faint. The experience of many babes in Christ is that when they rest in Christ they become partakers of His strength, and that the limit to the measure of strength received is their own faith, or lack of faith, in Him."—*Pres. Review*.

In Ephesians (3:16) Paul says: "That He would grant you, *according to the riches of His glory*, to be *strengthened with might* by His Spirit in the inner man." Strengthened "by the Spirit;" to what degree? "*According to the riches of His glory!*" If you can measure "the *riches of His glory*," then you can tell to what *degree* we may be strengthened by "His Spirit in the inner man." Again, in verse twenty: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding, abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*." What is God able to do? "All that we *ask*." Anything more? "Or *think*." Anything more? "*Above* \* \* that we ask or think." Anything more? "*Above all* that we ask or think." Anything more? "*Abundantly* above *all* that we ask or think." Anything more? "*Exceeding* abundantly, etc."

*According to what?* "According to the *power* that *worketh in us.*" *What power?* The power of the Almighty Holy Ghost! Still again, in Colossians (1:11) we read: "Strengthened with *all* might *according* to His glorious power." Isn't Paul extravagant? What does he mean by this strange language? "Strengthened with *all* might." The margin reads: "Made powerful with all might"—or with *all power*. Or, as in the revised version: "According to the might of His glory." How wonderful! O, my brethren, how marvelous our privilege! How almost overwhelming our responsibility! The Almighty, Holy Spirit, help us! What wonderful power is placed at our disposal! Will we lay hold of this sacred—Divine power, and use it to the glory of God, to the *utmost* degree? There is more truth than poetry in the trite saying: "With worms God can thresh mountains." Why limit the power of prayer—the *unlimited* power of prayer for anything agreeable to God's will? Has God put any limitation to the power of the Holy Spirit, that may come upon us, and work through us, in conquering the world of sinners about us, the flesh and the devil, other than the conditions of salvation?

#### SECRET OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE GOSPEL.

In this light we may see the efficiency of the Gospel. The Father, the Administrator of all things in heaven, earth and hell. The Son, having revealed the saving truths of the Gospel, and having made a satisfactory atonement for sin, is now our all prevailing Advocate. The Holy Ghost is the Almighty Agent, who, on earth,

mightily works *in us* to will and to do of His good pleasure. and through us, the Church, as an intelligent, free, and *co-operating* medium, to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, and the demolition of his kingdom. One of the foremost truths for the Church to learn well, is couched in the words of Jesus: "Without Me ye can do nothing." Another equally important truth is: "Our *sufficiency* is of *God*." We must take our places lowest of all, and make ourselves "of *no* reputation," and in our hearts, enthrone God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and crown them "Lord of all." Thus, we see that the efficiency of the Gospel, as far as its own *inherent* power is concerned, is *unbounded*. But the efficacy of the Gospel in its *practical* operations, is conditioned on the *faith* of the Church. The Church, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, makes it possible that the Gospel, in its *practical* operations, shall be *unbounded* in efficiency, to the *degree* that the Holy Spirit is *able* to empower her and enable her to prevail with sinners.

#### FEARFUL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

The *fact*, that the efficiency of the Gospel, in its *practical* operations, is conditioned on the obedience and faith of the Church, puts a responsibility on Christians, to an *alarming* degree! O, my God, who is sufficient for these things! and yet, "through Christ, which strengtheneth" us, by His *Almighty* Spirit, we "can do all things" that are agreeable to the Father's will. The Lord help us to take on this strength Divine! O, for more frequent repetitions of Pentecost!

## WILLING IN THE DAY OF GOD'S POWER.

During the great revival in 1857-8, a request for prayer was sent in to the leader of a noon-day prayer meeting, reading thus: "A praying wife requests the prayers of this meeting for her unconverted husband, that he may be converted, and be made an humble disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ." Instantly, a stout, burly man arose, and said: "*I* am that man! I have a pious, praying wife; and this request must be made for *me*." As soon as he sat down, in the midst of sobs and tears, another man arose and said: *I* am that man! I have a praying wife! She prays for me! I am *sure* I am that man! I want you to pray for me!" Three or four more rose and said, each: "I want you to pray for me!" The revival began, and soon, from four to five hundred were converted.

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF POWER.

A few illustrations of the degree of Divine power, as often received by the Church, may be in place. Frequently, under the ministry of such men as Hezekiah C. Worcester and Benjamin Abbott, men fell as if shot in battle. There was a holy unction attending their preaching which seems to have dropped out of the pulpit. Speaking of Worcester, Dr. Bangs writes: "The grace of God wrought mightily in him. Oh, what awful sensations ran through the assemblies while Calvin Worcester and others of like spirit were denouncing the just *judgments* of God against the impenitent sinner." "Such was the unction of his spirit," says another, "and the bold, resistless power of his appeals to the wicked, that few

of them could stand before him · they would either rush out of the house or fall to the floor under his word."

It is recorded of this holy man that when so far reduced as not to be able to speak above a whisper, his whispered utterances conveyed by another to the assembly, would thrill them like a trumpet, and fall with such power on the hearers that stout-hearted men were smitten down to the floor; and his very aspect is said to have so shone in the "Divine glory that it struck conviction into the hearts of many who beheld him."

Dr. Bangs further says: "At a quarterly meeting in the Bay of Quinte circuit, as the preacher commenced his sermon, a thoughtless man in the front gallery commenced, in a playful mood, to swear profanely, and otherwise to disturb the congregation. The preacher paid no attention to him until he was in the midst of his sermon, when, feeling strong in faith, and the power of God's might, suddenly stopping, he fixed his piercing eyes on the profane man; then, stamping his foot, and pointing his finger at him with great energy, he cried out, 'My God, smite him!' He instantly fell, as if shot through the heart with a bullet. At this moment such a Divine afflatus came down upon the congregation that sinners were crying to God for mercy in every direction, while the saints of God burst forth in loud praises to His name. Similar instances of God's gracious presence were not uncommon in those days."

While Jacob Knapp, the evangelist, was con-

ducting a revival, in the state of New York, a lady came forward as a seeker. Her husband became enraged and ran to her, like a madman, and jerked her from the altar and out of the church. Mr. Knapp dropped on his knees, and prayed God to convert or kill him. He was a healthy man. The next morning the man died.

In the village of Whitesboro, New York, Mr. Finney visited a cotton factory. On passing through one of the departments, a couple of young women eyed him closely, and evidently were greatly agitated, as he came near them. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, but her hands so trembled that she could not mend it. She grew more and more agitated, and could not proceed with her work. She burst into tears as Mr. Finney looked solemnly at her. The impression caught, almost like powder, and in a few minutes, nearly all in the room were in tears. This feeling spread through the factory. The owner of the mill, though an unconverted man, said to the superintendent: "Stop the mill, and let the people attend to religion, for it is more important that our souls should be saved than that this mill should run." The revival went through the mill with astonishing power, and in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted. What would be the result, in this community, if this Church, or one half of it, or even one quarter of it, should be thus filled and endued with Divine power? At least one thing would follow. There would be a resurrection of the dead in tresspasses and in sin, within twenty-four hours!

## THE MACHINE-SHOP ILLUSTRATION.

The following quotation is from the pen of a writer whose name I cannot recall. "Did you ever visit a great machine shop, where there are great forges, in which pieces of iron, great and small, are fired until they are so softened that they yield to the mighty blows of the great trip hammers? There are lathes, and emery wheels, each doing its appointed work. How wonderful as we stand and look on, as the great irons are forged on the anvil, or turned in the lathe, or polished on the emery wheel. In the foundry department each trip hammer is under the absolute control of the man who stands at the adjoining forge. By pressing his foot on a convenient lever, he crowds one end of his long and ponderous hammer up against a cogged wheel, where, as if by magic, like a maddened fury flies the other end, beating into bolts, by its ponderous blows, the glowing iron taken from the furnace." I have quoted the above with the purpose of turning it into a practical illustration. The smith at the forge is the Church. The power of the engine is the power of the Holy Ghost. The burning coals, in the furnace, are the words of God on fire. The cold, resisting and hardened irons, are cold, hardened and rebellious sinners. The heat of the furnace is the convicting power, the Holy Ghost, penetrating sinners and disposing them to yield in the day of God's power. The red-hot irons are convicted sinners. The trip hammer is the Word of God, wielded by the power of the Holy Ghost, but under the control of the Church. The lever is God's



promise, and the smith's foot on the lever is faith resting on God's promise, connecting the converting power of the Holy Ghost with the great trip hammer of God's truth, by which, the Holy Ghost molds and fashions the sinner from a child of the Devil into a child of God. When the smith takes his foot from the lever, the hammer is disconnected from the power, and becomes motionless. So, every Christian has it in his power to connect the energy of God with, or disconnect it from the Word. The belt of faith, bringing within his reach, omnipotent energy hangs by his side. He can slip it on or off the pulley—can put all heaven behind his effort to save men, or ignore this proffered help. My brother; my sister, is your hammer, or lathe, or wheel, in the great ecclesiastical workshop of God busy or idle? Is your faith-belt dangling and idle, or is it circling and grasping the pulley of God's promise for power to turn the lathe, or wheel in the workshop? The hand that puts the belt of faith on God's promise, is the hand of obedience. What can the operator do in his own strength, to move the great hammer, or run the lathe, or emery wheel? So, the Christian who goes in his *own* strength and tries to wield the hammer of Divine truth on cold and hardened sinners, can't make the slightest impression, but, when he puts the foot of faith on the lever of God's promise, instantly, Divine power thrills the hammer of truth, and it smites the sinner's heart, and breaks it into a thousand fragments. Sometimes the belt will slip from the pulley connecting the wheel, or lathe with the engine power. Then

something is wrong. So, faith often loses its hold of God. When it does so, something is wrong. Sin of any form in the heart will cause faith to slip from the promise. Impatience, anger, pride, love of the world, lust, unbelief, ceasing to pray, or the neglect of any duty will cause faith to slip its hold. The reason it is so difficult for some people to believe is, there is not a perfect surrender of the will to God's will, some part of the price is withheld. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us *not*, *then* have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." The card player, the dancer, or the slanderer, can't have this faith, and this power. The backslider, the grumbler, or faultfinder can't have this faith and this power. He who is under the dominion of a love of the world, or the power of lust, or the dominion of a selfish ambition, can't have this faith and this power. He who is actuated by selfish motives, whose eye is not single to God's glory, and whose whole life is not under the control of the unselfish utterance of Christ: "Thy will be done and not mine," can't have this faith and this power.

#### FINNEY'S SPIRITUAL POWER.

"I shall never forget," said a gentleman, "the first time I heard brother Finney. It was at that time when my mind had received the greatest prejudice against him, on account of what had been falsely reported of him. My eye met his, as he was in the attitude of prayer, as I entered the house of God. The first words which broke

upon my ear, brought such awe of the Divine presence over me, as I never had before experienced. The attitude of the man, the tones of his voice, the words and form of address, made me feel that he was in the immediate presence of the Infinite and Eternal Mind, and was speaking to God, face to face."

MR. MOODY'S EXPERIENCE.

Mr. Moody attributes his success, as an evangelist, to the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon his soul. After he had been converted twenty-one years, he felt that he needed *power*. Said he, "I requested a good woman, and some others, to come and pray with me, every Friday afternoon. O, how piteously I cried to God, that He might fill the empty need. After the fire in Chicago, I was in New York city, and going into a bank, on Wall street, it seemed as if I felt a strange and mighty power coming over me. I went up to the hotel, and there, in my room, I wept before God. I cried: 'O, God, stay Thy hand.' He gave me such a fulness, it seemed more than I could contain. I do not know of a sermon that I have preached *since*, but that God has given me *some soul*."

THE LOST ART FOUND.

Secure this power and the lost art of soul saving will be found. If we fail to tarry in active, longing expectation, "with prayer and supplication," for the promised power upon us, what answer will we give to lost souls at the judgment? With this power upon us we can bring souls to Christ in this community! How

little! O, how *little* of this power do I find in the Churches, as I go from place to place!

THE CHURCH SITTING IN THE ENERVATING LAP OF  
THE WORLD.

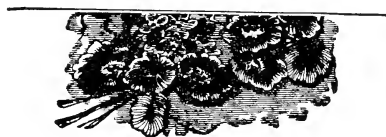
Samson's physical weakness or strength is graphically illustrative of the spiritual weakness or strength, of Christians. A divided Church, or a Church that indulges in questionable amusements, lotteries, fairs, bazaars, rafflings, grab-bags, fish-ponds, theatricals, etc., is sitting in the *enervating* lap of the world. Multitudes of adulterers and adulteresses, are already in the Churches, and multitudes more are coming into them—men and women unscripturally divorced and re-married, *i. e.*, before God not divorced at all, nor, is their re-marriage sanctioned in heaven. God has said of such: "They shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." They are millstones about the neck of the Church, dragging her death-ward and hell-ward. The great question is, *not*, how shall we get the world out of the Church, but how shall we get the Church out of the world? For it is the Church, that, in so far as she has fallen from grace has slidden *world-ward*! The Church can never take the Holy Spirit of power with her, into the world, for the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world are *deadly antagonistic*. How many in the Church have so grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit, by an indulgence of the spirit of the world, that they have lost all spiritual power.

While men and women are perishing all around us, and unless speedily rescued must perish forever, how terrible, that while Chris-

tians may, by the asking, receive a power from God by which they may pluck these lost ones as brands from the eternal burnings; I repeat, how terrible that Christians have so little power to bring the lost to Christ!

Brethren! how *guilty we are of criminal indifference!* Do we *want* this power? Are we looking, hungering, believing for, and *grasping* this power *now*? Will we, Jacob-like, wrestle with God until we get it? O, my God, send Thy Holy Spirit to help us to *surrender* to Thee, and believe for the baptism of power *now*!

“Lord, we believe to us and ours,  
The Apostolic promise given;  
We wait the Pentecostal powers,  
The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”



## LECTURE XVIII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER; OR, THE PRIESTLY POWER OF BELIEVERS.*

#### THE THREE INTERCESSIONS.

In the holy Scriptures we read of three intercessions, *viz.* (1.) The intercession of Christ, as He pleads with His Father, in our behalf, as mentioned in Hebrews (7:25): "Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (2.) The intercession of the Holy Spirit pleading within us, by exciting the spirit of prayer, and for us, by presenting to God the Father, the precious fruits of His holy and helpful operations in our hearts. As Paul tells us in Romans (8:26,27): "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but, the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (3.) The intercession of the Church of God pleading in the behalf of men.

#### OBJECTIVELY, TWO KINDS OF PRAYER.

There are two kinds of prayer offered by the Church: (1.) Prayer for personal blessings. (2.) Intercessory prayer—prayer for others. Usually, Christians pray too little for others. It

should be otherwise. The Head of the Church designs to make of believers, prevailing mediatorial princes, who can call God's blessing on the community, the nation and the world. While the little child asks a favor of its father, for itself, it also asks, "Please give some for sister, too." It is the nature—the very core of the religion of Jesus Christ (which is love) to bless others. The love of Christ, in a human heart, will lead that person to do just what Christ does. (1.) Christ gave Himself for others. (2.) He prays for others. So will His followers do. An example is given in the intercession of Abraham, with God, for Lot and his family.

In speaking of the subject of intercession, I shall confine myself, in this, and the two following lectures, to the intercession of the Church.

#### MEANING OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

To intercede is to come between two parties and secure, by personal influence, or entreaty, a favor for one of them ; or, if they are at variance to effect, or try to effect, a reconciliation. This is the meaning when applied to Christ's intercession for us ; also that of the Holy Spirit, and of man for man.

#### INTERCESSORY PRAYER ENJOINED.

The Word of God enjoins on Christians the duty of presenting intercessory prayer to God. Paul writing to Timothy (1. 2:1.) says : " I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercession and giving of thanks be made for all men : for kings, and for all that are in authority, \* \* for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have

all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

This Scripture gives us a very comprehensive view of the amplitude of the Gospel plan of salvation, and calls our attention to the most efficient means to be used in saving men, and therefore should be carefully noted. Allow me, parenthetically, to throw into the apostle's statement a few words. (1.) God has provided salvation for all men. "He (Christ) tasted death for every man," and therefore (because He has provided salvation for *all*) "will (wishes to) have *all* men to be saved (not simply convicted of sin, but *saved*), and to come (where?) into (what?) the knowledge (*experimental—saving*) of (what?) the truth" (what truth?) "as it is *in* Jesus." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make *intercession* for them." (2.) God has enjoined (what God enjoins as His will and pleasure is possible) "that first of all, supplications, prayers and intercessions (the prayer of *faith*, of course, for the *end desired*) be made for all men (what for?) that they (*all*) may be *saved* (if it is possible for all men to be saved, then it is equally possible to bring all men unto the knowledge of the truth; for God has not made it possible for *all* men to be saved without providing *all* means necessary to save *all* men), and come unto the knowledge of the truth." (3.) Therefore, the prayer of faith *may* be offered for all men, so that all men, *saveable*, will actually be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Please do not say, "I cannot accept the last



statement," until you shall have heard the next two lectures. I am aware that it is a strong putting of the case. I hope that following statements may lead you to think that the affirmation is not unwarrantable.

Of course the prayer of faith for a soul implies that he will yield, repent, believe and be saved, because he wants to be saved.

IS PARDON PROVIDED FOR ALL ?

I think there can be no question but that God has provided salvation for all men. "He (Christ) became the propitiation, not for our sins only, etc." Having made *provision* for the salvation of *all*, He is certainly willing to *save all*. Peter says (2 Pet. 3:9): "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance"—"that repentance that needeth not to be repented of;" and, as I have already quoted: "For this (offering the prayer of *faith* for *all* men) is good, and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour, who will have *all* men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Why then are not all men, *within* the conditions of the Gospel, saved? First and above all, because *all* Christians are not *completely* consecrated to God, and, do not exercise *all* possible faith in God, for the salvation of *all* men. God has done his part, then the whole of the responsibility rests upon Christians and sinners. Christians are responsible beyond what sinners are, to the degree, that they have received greater light than sinners have. If there were universal, and complete consecration of *all* Church

members to God's perfect will, there would be, simultaneously, a *universal* outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all men.

All *saveable* sinners, in a given community, may thus be brought to Christ. Many instances of the kind are known. If one community may thus be saved, then the world may be, inasmuch as the world is made up of individual communities.

Of course, *reasonable* time must be given for the operation of the agencies, and the use of the means.

#### INTERCESSORY PRAYER AN INSTINCT.

The spirit of intercessory prayer is begotten by the Holy Ghost, in the heart, when the babe in Christ is born into the kingdom of grace. He inhales and exhales the breath of prayer for others. The Holy Spirit inspires intercessory prayer, as an *instinct*.

#### A GRACIOUS PRIVILEGE.

How wonderful that we may reach our imploring hands to heaven, and expectantly wait until they are filled, and then reach them out, over other hearts, and into them drop blessings inestimable. We may reach the finger tips of our Christian influence, tingling with power, to the boundaries of the earth, and touch, and move, and uplift the immortal souls of men.

#### POWER OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

In ordinary prayer we have communion with God. In intercessory prayer we have power with God. As Moses and Abraham, Elijah and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, on their knees, and on their faces, grip the promises, and close in

with God, heaven, earth, and hell are mightily moved; thrones tremble, totter and fall; and the life currents of nations are reversed. O, the infinite importance, dignity, and power, with which the intercessor is invested!

#### WHAT GIVES VALUE TO OUR PRAYERS?

The value or power of our intercession for sinners, depends entirely on the merit of Christ's atoning death, His intercessions before the throne of heaven, for us and others, and the intercessions of the Holy Spirit within us.

#### A STUNNING FACT.

Upon the faithful performance of this most important duty, by Christians, depends the fulfillment of many of God's gracious promises. It is a stunning and almost overwhelming fact, that God conditions the bestowment of blessings on others, even their eternal salvation, to a great extent, on the intercessions of Christians.

#### A STUPENDOUS MYSTERY.

The condescension of the Infinite and independent God, in the employment of such feeble and circumscribed beings as we are, in the salvation of souls, is not only a stupendous mystery, but equally marvelous. Thus saith the Lord God: "I will yet for this be enquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them." (Ez. 36:37.) In Luke (2:25-38), blessings are foretold which are yet contingent—dependent on prayer.

#### THE CHURCH'S PRIVILEGE.

In the economy of redemption, even the intercessions of Christ, are not available without they are supplemented by the intercessions of the Church. When will the Church come to

such a comprehension and realization, of this truth as shall incite her to rise to the full level of her sacred privilege, and receive and use the power that God has put within her reach, to save the race, and, not only hold the balance of moral power, in the spheres of the political, financial and social life of the world, but sit on the throne, and, *spiritually* be the godly Queen of all nations.

#### THE PRAYERS OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH MINGLE.

Though it is written: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied," yet, unless Zion travails in soul-birth, at the throne of grace, sinners will not be born again. The intercessional incense of God's people on earth must rise and mingle with the intercessional incense of God's Son in heaven. John saw the prayers of saints and the incense in the golden censer—the intercession of Christ, commingling and ascending together. This fact we should contemplate with deepest humility, holy reverence and sacred awe.

#### PRAYER AND PROPHECY.

"But the fulfillment of prophecy, conditioned on the prayers of Christians, makes the fulfillment of that prophecy uncertain." Not in the least. He who foresaw the event, also foresaw the means of its accomplishment. Divine knowledge of future events does not imply coercion of the human will, or fatality.

#### PRAYER AND THE PROMISES.

To understand the amazing compass of the promises we should search them out, and study them, with all the interest and avidity of a legatee

searching the will of a rich benefactor ; that we may plead them with unfailing confidence, and eager expectation, of their fulfillment.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE HELPFUL IN PRAYER.

A knowledge and consciousness of God's readiness to hear and answer prayer is very encouraging and helpful to the faith of the petitioner. "God so loved the world, etc." "He who spared not His own son, etc." Could anything be more pleasing to God than to save a human soul, aside from the maintenance of law? A powerful persuasion that God Himself desires to answer prayer and bestow the blessing is most important. "Thou art more ready to give, etc.," may never be spoken too frequently. There is a depth of desire to do the sinner good, in His heart of love, that no human conception can possibly fathom. He alone measures fully his need, comprehends the intrinsic value of spiritual benefits, and knows how their bestowment will affect him both in this life and in the life to come. If this tender attitude of God, toward sinners, is fully appreciated by us, at the time of asking, the ground of an expectant faith will be firmly laid. There should be, at the moment of supplication, a profound sense that God is love. Surely this will quicken our appreciation of His great and precious promises ; this will tend to remove from our hearts that hesitation in approaching the throne of grace, caused by a consciousness of personal unworthiness. Nothing will do more to inspire our faith than to possess a full, all-absorbing sense of God's love for his intelligent creatures. Even though He is grieved on account of our

weakness or sinfulness, we should, nevertheless, remember that He still pursues us with love. Even though the individuals for whom we pray are rebellious and obdurate in heart, our faith should still seize upon the great truth: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.* O, how mighty is this truth in the soul of a suppliant!

*"What can successfully obstruct such intercourse with God? Nothing.* The Holy Spirit has made intercession within us of intense power; implanting an inexpressible desire, giving the ability to ask according to the will of God, and magnifying in the soul at the precise time of prayer, the infinite love of the Father's heart. *This arrangement of asking and receiving is Divine;* it could have had no other origin. Human skill could not have projected it; higher orders of mind could never have suggested it. This is the product of infinite wisdom and love alone. 'All things are of God.' 'Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'"

A PATHETIC SCENE.

A Portland (Oregon) correspondent of the *Interior*, vouches for the truth of the following incident, showing how ready God is to hear and answer prayer. The story is one of much pathos, and is narrated by the physician himself, as follows:

"Let me tell you of an experience of mine that taught me the forgiving power of God's love, more than any one thing in my life. This was before I gave my heart to Christ, while I was

still in the darkness of the shadows of the mountains that I had created of skepticism and unbelief. One Sunday evening I was sitting in my office, listening to the church bells ringing for evening service, and studying over a sad case I was then attending. It was a young woman, an inmate of one of those houses that curse this city ; she was dying with typhoid fever. Dissipation and disease had done their work and left no hope. A rap at my door, and word that 'Nellie was worse.' In a few moments I was at her bedside, almost in the shadow of the stately spire of one of our city churches. With a sign of recognition a poor little hand was held out and laid in mine. 'Doctor, can't you save me?' came from the thin lips. Kindly as I could I told her there was no help for her on earth ; her hope must be in the world to come. Through the open windows, borne upon the soft air of autumn, came the music of the organ at the church close by. Soon the singing of a hymn familiar to childhood caught her ear, and as she listened, the tears flowed down her cheeks, and at last in the agony of her despair she cried, 'Oh, my God, my God, if I were only a little girl with my mamma again.' It was the wail of a broken heart. I talked earnestly with her, asking that I might send for a clergyman to talk with her and to pray for her. 'No, no,' she said, 'please don't leave me, no one can do me any good but you. Doctor, (this time the request came unhesitatingly), you pray for me. Please pray that God will forgive all my sins. He will hear you ; tell Him how sorry I am, and

to please forgive poor, poor Nellie. How could I pray, myself a sinner, but a power like the weight of a thousand worlds bore me to my knees, and I asked God to forgive this poor, dying girl. Prayer brought peace to her heart, while it added to the burden of my own. A few moments quiet, then I saw the delirium of the fever returning. In her wandering I caught the words, 'Mamma, kiss little Nellie.' I thanked God that even in delirium Nellie was with her mamma again in their quiet, happy country home. No tempter had entered there; the sunshine chased the shadows across the floor; through the open window the gentle breeze brought stories of rippling brooks, of buttercups and daisies, of singing birds, of cool shadows beneath the forest trees. Another change—I saw the end was near. The lips moved, and I bent forward to hear the thin lips repeat:

'Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.'

Please, God, bless dear papa and mamma and little Nellie.'

Quiet again. I could almost feel the rustling of the angels' wings as they hovered about that bed. A gentle sigh, a loosening of the clasp that held my hand, and, gently as the dew falls upon the hillside, her spirit was borne to its Maker. I returned to my office, but not to rest. The power that brought peace to Nellie, brought trouble to my soul, and only through prayer in my own silent room did I see the first glimmer of the light that grows brighter to me every day. It seems a long distance off, but with the help of



God I hope to draw nearer and nearer until all the shadows are gone, and I can see my way to a life, bright and clear in the home of God."

If our Father in heaven is so willing to hear and answer the prayer of one poor sinner for another, how much more the prayer of His obedient and trusting child, for the sinner!

WE HAVE EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT.

How encouraging to know that, in our intercessions, we join, both the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, in their intercessions for sinners, and ourselves. There is no good that we, or others need for which the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit do not intercede. Hence, our intercessions, when in harmony with the Divine will are conjoined with theirs. What we pray for below, prompted and empowered by the intercessions of the Holy Spirit within us, Christ prays for in heaven before the Father's throne. Since the intercessions of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church are joined in *one* intercession, can any true prayer fail of an answer, if persisted in? Verily not.

A WIFE'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

The weakest Christian, the babe in Christ, may bring a power that will overcome the resistance of the most depraved. In Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1857, the owner of a line of omnibuses in the city, and keeper of a saloon, made money and "wasted his substance in riotous living." His wife went to the revival prayer meetings and became a convert. He forbade her, but she would go. Finally he said to her; "now, if you will go into the chamber and pray with me, you

may pray as much as you please, but you must not go to the prayer meetings. She told him she did not know how to pray with him, or for him, for she had only begun to pray for herself. But they went into the chamber, and he was surprised to hear her pray. That day everything went wrong. The next morning again they went into the chamber to pray. Said he: "I thought I would let her pray it out, and, by keeping her from prayer meetings I would break the charm." But there was a power in her prayers that took hold of his heart, and, as they arose from their knees he kissed his wife and went away. His heart was softened and subdued, and he came humbly at the feet of Jesus and was saved.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

During the great awakening in '57, away in the west, lived a Roman Catholic family in which there was a little girl, seven years of age. She was induced to go to a Protestant Sabbath School. The father became very anxious about his soul. Once, at the midnight hour, he arose in an agony. He begged his wife to pray for him, as he said he did not know how to pray for himself. She told him she could not pray any better than he could. "What shall I do then?" "Perhaps" said she, "our little Mary can pray." The father went up to her chamber, where she was fast asleep, and took her up from her bed in his arms, and bore her down stairs; putting her gently down he said to her, in great earnestness, "Mary, can you pray?" "O, yes, father, I can pray." "Will you kneel down and pray for your father?" "Yes, I will pray for

you." So, she kneeled, put up her little hands and said: "Our Father, which art in heaven, etc.," going through with the Lord's prayer. Then she prayed for her father in her own language, asking God to have mercy on him and to pardon all his sins for Jesus Christ's sake. When she had finished her prayer, her father said to her, "Mary, can you read in your Bible?" "O, yes, father, I can read. Shall I read to you in my Bible?" "Yes, read to me." She began at the third of John. She read till she came to that verse: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "O! Mary," said he, "is that true?" "Yes, father, it is here. Jesus Christ said so." "Well, that is just what I, your poor father, need." "Yes, father, hear the rest of it: 'For God so loved the world, etc.'" "O! that is for me: 'Whosoever believeth in Him.' I can believe in Him. I do believe in Him;" and from that hour the father went on his way rejoicing with great joy.

## MULTIPLIED VICTORIES.

Mr. Finney tells us that a "pious man, in the western part of New York, was sick with consumption. He was a poor man and had been sick for years. An unconverted merchant in the place had a kind heart and used to send him, now and then, something for his comfort, or for his family. He felt grateful, but could make no return for the kindness, as he wanted to. At length he determined, that the best return he could make, would be to pray for his friend.

He began to pray, his soul kindled, and he got hold of God. There was no revival, but by-and-by, to the astonishment of everybody, this merchant came right out on the Lord's side. The fire kindled all over the place; a powerful revival followed, and a multitude were converted. This poor man lingered in this way for several years and died. After his death I visited the place, and his widow put into my hands his diary. Among other things he said in his diary: 'I am acquainted with about thirty ministers and Churches.' He then goes on to set apart certain hours in the day and week, to pray for each of these ministers and Churches, and also, certain seasons for praying for certain missionary stations. Then followed, under different dates, such facts as these: 'To-day,' naming the date, 'I have been enabled to offer, what I call, the prayer of faith, for the outpouring of the Spirit on—Church, and I trust in God there will soon be a revival there.' Under another date: 'I have to-day been enabled to offer, what I call, the prayer of faith, for such a Church, and trust there will soon be a revival there.' Thus, he had gone over a great number of Churches, recording the fact that he had prayed for them in faith. Revival, after revival followed, in the several places in the order in which he had prevailed in prayer, both at home and in mission Churches."

Christians become mighty in intercessional prayer in proportion as they become filled with the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of intercession.

Brethren, when our intercessions join and commingle with the all prevailing intercessions of

Christ and the Holy Spirit, they become almighty in the fulfillment of God's will.

SINNERS YIELD WHEN CHRISTIANS PREVAIL.

"The ungodly by nature are totally indisposed to obey God and seek salvation—*i. e.*, unless God interpose the influence of His Spirit, not a man on earth will ever obey the commands of God." So far as we know, the Holy Spirit never operates, *savingly*, on sinners, except in answer to prevailing prayer. Therefore, prevailing prayer must be offered by Christians, before sinners will be disposed to come to Christ for salvation.

Dr. Bonar has it right, when he says: "God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human priesthood is one of the essential parts of His eternal plan. To rule creation by man is His design; to carry on the worship of creation by man, is no less part of His design.

"Priesthood is the appointed link between heaven and earth, the channel of intercourse between the sinner and God. Such a priesthood, in so far as expiation is concerned, is in the hands of the Son of God alone; in so far as it is to be the medium of communication between Creator and creature, it is also in the hands of redeemed men—of the Church of God.

"God is seeking kings, but not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen man must furnish Him with the rulers of His universe. Human hands must wield the sceptre; human heads must wear the crown."

"But there's a power which man can wield,  
When mortal aid is vain,  
That power is prayer which soars on high,  
Through Jesus, to the throne,  
And moves the hand that moves the world,  
To bring salvation down."

## LECTURE XIX.

*PREVAILING PRAYER AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER;  
OR, HE WHO PREVAILS WITH GOD  
PREVAILS WITH MEN.*

### QUESTION.

May the prayer of *faith* be offered for any sinner who has not sinned away his day of grace? Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:1-3): "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings and for all in authority \* \* for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." To help our thought, and encourage our faith, I will quote first John (5:14,15): "And this is the confidence (the faith) that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." There are at least four great truths stated in this portion of God's Word. (1.) That God hears and answers the prayer of faith, for anything agreeable to His will. It is agreeable to His will that the prayer of faith shall be offered for all men, *because* He has *enjoined* it. (2.) That we may know that our prayer is heard and answered, if it be the prayer of faith, and agreeable to His will. (3.) When we know that our prayer

is heard, we know that our petition is granted. (4.) We know that we have the petition (the identical thing asked for) that we desired of Him.

THE SPIRIT MOVES THE SINNER IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

As I understand the teaching of God's Word, no one can correctly say that the prayer of faith may not be offered for the salvation of any sinner who has not sinned away his day of grace. In order to the salvation of sinners, the Holy Spirit moves Christians to pray for *all* sinners in the community, specifically, or generally. This fact is in keeping with the genius, scope, and statement of the Gospel. That He should do so, to make the salvation of the sinner possible, is a *necessity*, for the sinner "is dead in trespasses and in sins," and without the quickening operations of the Holy Ghost, will not, nay, cannot come to Christ for salvation—he cannot repent, cannot believe unto salvation; for: "Without *Me*," said Christ, "ye can do *nothing*;" and, because the Holy Spirit, so far as we know, never convicts the sinner and moves him Christ-ward, except in answer to prayer.

WHY ARE NOT ALL SINNERS SAVED?

If the Holy Spirit excites Christians to offer the prayer of faith for the salvation of *one* sinner, then, He would likewise breathe the spirit of prayer into the hearts of all Christians, that they may offer the prayer of faith for the conversion of all sinners, who are within the condition of the Gospel. God is no respecter of persons. He could not give the spirit of prayer, and the power to prevail, for *one* sinner, and not do so for *any* sin-

ner—*i. e.*, for *all* sinners. Then why are not *all* sinners, who are within the conditions of the Gospel, saved? I answer, because *all* Christians have not consecrated themselves to God's service, to the utmost, and used the spirit of prayer, excited within them, to the last degree possible—have not exercised all possible faith necessary to reach that result. Is not the time coming when, "all shall know the Lord?" How shall that be brought about? If possible in the *future*, as to the race, is it not possible now, as to any given community? If not, why not? Of course, utmost faith always implies utmost works "for faith without works is dead, being alone."

MAY ANY SAVABLE SINNER BE BROUGHT TO  
REPENTANCE?

To put it in its most objectionable form, to any one who may differ from me, in the discussion of this subject, I will here change the phraseology of the question, with which I started out, without, really, changing the nature of the point involved a particle, though I may make the question more difficult to answer, to your minds, by doing so. Can any savable sinner be brought to repentance? I answer, yes, if the prayer of faith is offered, as it may be, before he reaches the point of irreversibility. What is according to God's pleasure, is possible. It *is* God's pleasure, that any savable sinner, come to repentance; therefore, it *is* possible to bring any savable sinner to repentance.

ARE THE MEANS AND AGENCIES COMPETENT?

The salvation of sinners is the result of the operations of the Holy Ghost, through certain chosen agencies and means. There can be no



question, but that the Holy Ghost is competent to do His work. Then the question is: Are the means and agencies chosen to save all men competent to that end, if used as God intended they should be? If they are *not*, then the Gospel *scheme* is a comparative failure. If they are competent, the end may be reached, as soon as Christians can be brought to a complete consecration to God, to exercise all possible faith, and put forth all reasonably possible effort—giving reasonable time for the operations of the agencies, and the use of the means.

OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST CONDITIONED ON  
THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH.

The prayer of faith will certainly secure the operations of the Holy Ghost, at all times. The operations of the Holy Ghost will always be in *proportion* to the faith of the Church, other things being equal. There are no limits to the operations of the Holy Ghost, in any case, of the individual, or community, except the *want of faith* on the part of the Church, coercion of the sinner's will, or the unpardonable sin. God cannot change. The principles underlying prayer cannot change; and when they are brought to bear upon the Church and sinners, by an increasing and persevering faith, results must follow, sooner or later. God's methods of working are dictated by infinite wisdom, but the degree of the operations of the Holy Ghost, depends on the faith of the Church, "According to your faith, be it unto you." "Be it unto thee, even as *thou* wilt." God, Himself, will determine, whether He will come as the softly distilling dew, or burning flame, or thunder peal;

but it is entirely for His people to determine, whether *one* soul shall be saved, or a score. Of course, not without the sinner's consent. The fact is, that all undamned sinners *want* to be saved, and it is only a question of *time*, with them, as to *when* they will submit to God.

“CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.”

Circumstances in a given case, of the individual, or community, may make it far more difficult to exercise faith for victory, than in other given cases. It is easy, or difficult, to prevail in prayer for the salvation of sinners, as they have, or have not, become hardened in sin. It is easy, or difficult to prevail *for* sinners, as it is easy, or difficult, for the Holy Spirit to prevail *with* sinners. Whether it is easy, or difficult, for the Holy Spirit to prevail with sinners, depends largely on the *attitude* Christians and the unsaved, have taken toward each other; whether an attitude of sympathy, or antagonism. But, the Holy Spirit is able so to help our infirmities, that the prayer of faith, for the salvation of any savable sinner, may be offered, if all possible faith is exercised, *before* he reaches a state of irreversible moral obduracy. No Christian may offer the prayer of faith for all sinners. God has spread this privilege and responsibility over the whole Church. The Holy Spirit will press one Christian to pray for a certain sinner, and another Christian to pray for other sinners, or, He may lead all Christians in the community to pray for a certain sinner, or one Christian to pray for scores of sinners. I do not say that all Christians in a community, can offer *immediately* the prayer of faith for all savable sinners in

the community. Why? Because the present state of grace, of Christians, and the littleness of the faith, of many, are such as to require time, more or less, to make a complete surrender to God and exercise the faith necessary. Victorious—all masterful faith, has its beginning, development, and perfection, and it takes *time* to perfect faith for a specific result—for faith to do its perfect work. Yet, many Christians take far more time than is necessary. Nor, may all sinners in the community be immediately saved, though prevailing prayer be offered for their salvation, because all sinners may not immediately yield. One great trouble with us is, if we don't see everybody saved in the twinkling of an eye—if we do not see immediate results, or very soon, we begin to doubt, faint, and give it up.

As I said, almost everything depends on the moral condition of Christians and of the community of the unsaved, and, on the relations Christians and the unsaved sustain to each other, or the attitude they assume toward each other. In one community the pastor has an almost unlimited influence over the unsaved; in another community he has but a very limited influence over the ungodly. So, of Church members. It is easily seen that, in one instance, it is far easier to reach great results and sooner, than in the other. But, in either case there are no insurmountable difficulties, within the conditions I have named. Thousands of facts could be given in proof of this statement. In the instance in which a great gulf separates the pastor and unsaved, or the Church and unsaved, or between both pastor

and Church and the unsaved, or where the pastor has lost his hold of both the Church and the unsaved, the conversion of sinners will be delayed but need not be indefinitely or forever delayed. The invincible may be conquered.

THE TERMS ARE CLEAR AND UNALTERABLE.

The terms, on which the influence of the Holy Ghost are granted, are clear and unalterable. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts, etc." "Ask and ye shall receive." No restriction here, as to time, or degree. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in My name, He will give it you." "If we ask anything, according to His will, He heareth us."

EFFECTUAL CONVICTION FOLLOWS EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

*Effectual* conviction for sin, and the conversion of the sinner, follow sooner or later, *effectual* prayer, for the sinner's salvation. The first always follows the latter, *if* the victory of faith is maintained. It cannot be denied that God will, in answer to the prayer of faith, grant grace sufficient for the awakening, repentance and justification of a single sinner. The regeneration of *one* sinner implies the employment and use of the same means and agencies that would be required in the conversion of the world. It takes as much, of everything Divine, to save *one* sinner as to save *all* the sinners in the world. The aggregate being, only, the multiplication of individual cases. If *one* why not *one hundred*? All that is required, in the case of the hundred, is a *proportionate* increase of faith. If for *one*, savable, why not for anyone, savable? It seems to me that he who questions

the correctness of the foregoing statements makes all prayer profitless and idle. Be careful not to consider the difficulties, in the way of the realization of an answer to your prayer, inhering in the *subject* of your prayer. The greatest difficulty for you to overcome is a *want* of faith in God. The difficulties inhering in the subject of your prayer are God's difficulties to overcome by the operations of the Holy Ghost, through the faith and work of Christians.

#### PRAYER OF FAITH AND FREE-AGENCY.

But, says one, sinners are free-agents, and they may resist, and in many cases do resist. True, yet while the sinner has power to resist unto his eternal damnation, his power is practically limited, for if he has not reached a state of irreversible moral obduracy he will yield, sooner or later, rather than continue in a hell of awful conviction, *in every case in which the prayer of faith is offered and maintained*. In *itself*, the power of the Holy Ghost is absolutely *unlimited*, and that power will operate in proportion to our faith, up to the point of coercing the sinner's will. If God has ever saved a sinner, in answer to the prayer of faith, without interfering with his free-agency, He can do so again. That He has done so, no one will deny. If He has done so in *one* instance, He can do so in any number of instances, in which sinners are savable.

#### SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY.

Church members, who shield themselves, almost wholly, from a realization of their responsibility, as to the salvation of sinners, and, from a recognition of their own *criminal* unbelief

as to the efficiency of the agencies and means appointed, and ordained by God, to overcome the resistance of sinners; I say such Church members, by letting sinners, within their reach, slip into hell, are guilty of the soul blood of multitudes of the lost. Brethren, let us never again ease our consciences by saying: "Sinners are free-agents," until we shall have put forth *all* reasonably possible effort to save them.

THE CONVICTED SINNER YIELDS FROM CHOICE.

No sinner may be so convicted, as to be absolutely compelled to surrender to God, but, the Holy Spirit may so open the eyes of his understanding, and quicken the conscience, as He often has done, that the sinner may so *see* the infinite folly, and so *feel* the infinite guilt of sin, that he would greatly rather yield than be eternally damned. It is a law of the human mind to yield to the pressure of those motives whose power over the mind is greater than that of opposing motives, while the power is still left to yield to the greater. To illustrate: I call the attention of a child, standing on the railway, to the coming train, and immediately he springs from the place of danger; while the stupid inebriate, lying on the track, heeds not the note of warning. The motives to obey God, infinitely outweigh all motives to continue in sin; hence, if they are so pressed upon the mind and conscience, as to bring sin and holiness, an eternity of guilt and punishment, and an eternity of purity and happiness, to an impressive degree in proper contrast, the truth being accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the degree that it

may be, the sinner will, in every case, yield from choice, if he has not sinned away his day of grace.

THE PREROGATIVE OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE CHURCH.

It is the privilege of the Holy Spirit, and of the Church of God, to press the sinner to a *final* choice of eternal life or eternal death. Only those who have gone so far in sin that they have lost their balance beyond recovery, cannot be reached; those whose aversion to holiness and God has forever paralyzed, or so overcome, or overbalanced all good in the heart and life, that they *cannot* turn God-ward. They have lost their balance forever! When the influences for good, so far counterbalance, in the sinner, the power of evil, as to leave him free, under the direction of his conscience, judgment and will to choose the good; the good exerting itself to the utmost, consistently with the sinner's free-agency, and the sinner rejects the good, in *that* act his probation, his day of grace ceases *forever*—and of course the prayer of faith cannot be offered for him—he is virtually eternally damned. On the other hand, when the influences for good, so far counterbalance in the sinner, the power of evil, as to leave him free, under the direction of his conscience, judgment and will, to choose the good, the good exerting itself, if need be, to the utmost, consistently with his free-agency, and the sinner does *not* reject the good, his day of probation, his day of grace, has not passed, and of course the prayer of faith may be or has been offered for him. God knows when the sinner has reached a state of irreversible

moral obduracy and, of course, the Holy Spirit, "who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God," knowing that it is *not* in harmony with the will of God, to pray for his salvation, will not prompt or help to offer the prayer of faith for his salvation. Also, God knows when the sinner has *not* reached a state of irreversible, moral obduracy, and of course, the Holy Spirit, "who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," knowing that it *is* in harmony with the will of God," to pray for his salvation, will prompt and help to offer the prayer of faith for his salvation. The prayer of faith may be offered any time *before* he reaches the point of irreversible moral obduracy. Right here, to me, a very interesting question arises, *viz.*: To what extent is it the privilege of God, in answer to prayer, and by the most faithful use of other means, by the Church, to turn an awful hell of conviction into the sinner—conviction of sin, guilt, peril, and of the doom of the finally impenitent? I ask, how far may God do this consistently with the principles of His government? Has He limited Himself, nearly so greatly, as many teach? And, may not an error, as to this question, entertained and advanced by Christian teachers, greatly, at least *indirectly*, imperil the salvation of the unsaved? At this point allow me to ask another question: How far may a parent correct a refractory child without infringing on his free-agency; that is, without infringing on the rights of the child—without doing him an injustice? I grant that there is room for a variety of opinions, but, I think that all will agree that the parent would



be justified in continuing the correction till the will of the child yields to that of the parent. While it is a fact, that the child may resist to his death—he has the power to resist, and resist all correction; yet, being warned of the possible result of continued resistance, I ask, Is there a child, if taken in hand in early life, who would continue to resist in spite of all just correction? The parent may conquer and subdue the child, I say, if the child is taken in hand in early life, though the parent may have to resort to severe measures sometimes; yet, who ever cried out: “The child is a free-agent, and you must not interfere with his free-agency.” The parent does not *coerce* the will of the child, but he makes it so very unpleasant for the little rebel, that, by-and-bye he is only too glad to yield to his father’s pleasure. Has the Infinite Father, and Judge of all the earth allowed Himself *less* liberty, in dealing with rebellious man, than is allowed an earthly parent, in dealing with his refractory child? Has God reserved to Himself the prerogative to so trouble the sinner, day and night, by so convicting him of his sins that he cannot eat, sleep, or work? Ten thousand examples declare, beyond a question, that He *has* reserved the right, in infinite love and mercy, to turn the wicked into hell, here on earth—a hell as *terrible* as that of the eternally damned, that He may bring them to a surrender. Has He not done so myriads of times?

NO SINNER WILL RESIST ALL POSSIBLE CONVICTION.

Is there a savable sinner on earth, who, if turned into such a hell, would resist? No one believes there is. Other things being equal, the

torments of the hell of conviction are in proportion to the *degree* of the faith of the Church. One great difficulty, perhaps the greatest, lies in the fact that Christians, generally, have so little faith in the almost unlimited possibilities of prayer. If the above is correct, then, there is not a savable sinner but who may be brought to repentance. "My father's prayers, like mountains surround me," exclaimed a persistently wayward son, as on the threshold of death, he surrendered to God.

POWER TO SAVE AND POWER TO HELP TO BELIEVE  
ARE EQUAL.

You may specify the wickedest, savable man in the whole community. Is it possible to believe that God will save him? If it is possible for God to save him it is possible for us to believe that He will, because the power of the Holy Spirit to help the infirmity of our faith is equal to the power of God to overcome the resistance of the sinner. The power of God to save, and the power of the Holy Spirit to help us to believe, are equal and one, hence, if it is possible for God to save the sinner, it is possible for us to believe that He will.

MAY I OFFER THE PRAYER OF FAITH FOR ANY  
SINNER?

I answer, if the Holy Ghost begets within you a great desire—an irrepressible and inexpressible groaning, or a mighty Divine impulse to pray for the salvation of a certain sinner or sinners, you may offer the prayer of faith for his, or their conversion, as certainly as that you live, for the Holy Ghost never begets

within us a spirit of prayer for anything that God will not grant, or for what is impossible, if we continue to exercise that spirit of prayer and believe for the answer, as we may. Still, you ask: "But, may I secure the Holy Spirit's help to offer the prayer of faith for any savable sinner?" I know of no reason why you may not. Surely, no one knows to the contrary. It is a blessed fact, well known to soul winners, that as we become filled with the Spirit, and faith increases, our minds and faith reach out from the one sinner, on which they at first fastened, to the second, third, tenth, fiftieth, until they will fasten on the multitude of the lost in the community—on all whom God would save; not daring to leave out of the embrace of a living, vigorous and conquering faith a sinner. "Father Nash's" faith would thus reach out and take in the most notoriously dare-devil sinner in the community, and the sinner would be saved. God would have the faith of the Church take hold of His promises for the effectual conviction of any sinner for whom Christ died—every sinner upon whom infinite love is set.

#### WHERE WILL YOU FIX THE LIMIT?

If this is not possible, then the agencies appointed, and the means chosen to bring savable sinners to Christ are not fully competent, and cannot be effectual in bringing all to repentance for whom Christ died—for whom salvation has been provided. That is, the provision for the salvation of men is ample, but the agencies and means, including the agency of the Holy Ghost, are not competent. If they are competent to

bring *one* sinner to Christ, then they are competent to bring *any savable* sinner to Christ, for God can consistently overcome the resistance of the most obdurate sinner on the same principle that He may overcome the resistance of the most pliable rebel against Him. Where are you going to put a limit to the duration and intensity of the corrective operations of the Holy Ghost? Where the sinner says "No?" You cannot do that, for each of millions of Christians, this moment, can testify and say: "I said no, but still the Spirit strove, and God's people pleaded until I yielded. If God, in His infinite goodness, has so pursued sinners that after they had said no, perhaps a hundred times, they afterward yielded and were saved; on the same principle, He may consistently, and justly, press *any* savable sinner, till he will yield to be saved. There is no more compulsion in the one case than in the other.

I think no one will deny that God is able so to reveal to any sinner his lost condition—his guilt, his awful peril, and the terrible doom that awaits the finally impenitent in the world to come, as that a sinner will gladly and freely forsake a life of sin for a life of holiness. There is no coercion of the will, for God may not do that absolutely. God works by means, and on condition of the faith of the Church. It seems to me, that you must take the position, that after the truth has been placed before the sinner, he must be left without the *slightest* pressure, by the Holy Spirit, or Christians, to choose for himself, or you must acknowledge that God may *so* press the sinner as to compel him to a final choice,

but if the prayer of faith is offered for him, as it may be, before he reaches a *final* choice, *adverse* to God and his own soul, he will yield to be saved.

## ILLUSTRATION.

To illustrate the principle involved, we will suppose a Christian in any community, becomes deeply interested in the salvation of sinners in his community, and breathes his heart's desires to God that He will save the lost. His mind, and heart, and faith fix on a single sinner, and he writes the name of that sinner on the fly-leaf of his Bible. But, somehow as he prays, other sinners in the community come before his mind, and *their* lost condition, *too*, presses on his heart, and, from a heart full of the love of Christ that constrained Him to taste "death for every man," he cannot shut out of his *prayer* the soul-interests of this, that, or the other neighbor. He continues to lengthen the list of names until he has written twenty, fifty, or one hundred names. Now, if he has selected these names promiscuously, or because of some peculiar relation they may bear to himself, geographically, relatively, or doctrinely, he continues to pray and work for their salvation, and all are saved. On the same principle, why may not all sinners in a community be brought to repentance, if *all* Christians in the community will do their whole duty?

If the foregoing supposition is possible, and has been realized in many instances what may be done by the united efforts of all Christians in the community? I will mention several actual

occurrences, illustrating and confirming the position I have taken.

#### THE TEACHER AND HIS FORTY PUPILS.

The following case, abridged, is given by Dr. Patton in his "Prayer and its Remarkable Answers." "The author knows of a theological student, who, in a Presbyterian Church, in New York city, took charge of a Bible class of about forty young ladies with scarcely a professor of religion in it. He solemnly determined to seek the conversion of every member. He prayed for, and, as occasion permitted, spoke to them personally until within three or four years every one, with one exception, was a Christian. There was but one of those who remained steadily in the class who continued obdurate, and she set her will, with great firmness against conversion and seemed insensible to all appeals, though more labor was expended on her than on any two or three others. When the student finished his studies and entered the ministry, Harriet J— was, apparently, farther from God than ever. He went elsewhere, to live and labor, as a minister of Christ and had no further opportunity to speak with her about her soul's salvation. But occasionally she would occur to his thoughts, and he would pray God to touch her heart. Time rolled on and twenty-seven years had passed, when he chanced to preach one Sunday in Brooklyn, his own residence being a thousand miles distant. At the close of the services a middle aged lady stood at the foot of the pulpit stairs, and, as he came down accosted him with these words: 'Excuse me, but I used to

be in your Bible class. Do you not remember Harriet J——? I am now Mrs. —— and live in this city.' Yes, indeed, he remembered her. How could he forget one for and with whom he had pleaded so often? He seized her hand and said: 'Harriet, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' And to his unutterable joy she replied: 'Yes, I trust I do.' His prayers, after all, had been heard, and the *one notable exception* had ceased to be such."

THE CONVERTED ATHEIST AND THE SUBJECTS OF HIS PRAYER.

"The author of 'Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation' gives an account of a man of his acquaintance, a notorious and profane atheist. By the persuasion of pious relatives, who had long prayed for his conversion, he was induced to attend a series of religious meetings, where he was brought to see his condition as a sinner, and to exercise saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Old things' having 'passed away, and all things became new,' the change was so strikingly great that it was obvious to all who knew him. He immediately sought reconciliation with his enemies, and asked their forgiveness, and tried to benefit them by leading them to Christ. He began to visit from house to house, laboring and praying with his neighbors, and inviting them to attend religious worship on the Sabbath. When converted, one of his first acts, although he had heard nothing of any such act in others, was to make out a list of all his own associates then living within reach of his influence. For the conversion of these he determined to labor

as he had opportunity, and pray daily. On his list were one hundred and sixteen names, among whom were skeptics, drunkards, and other individuals as little likely to be reached by Christian influence as any other men in the region. Within two years of the period of the old man's conversion, one hundred of these individuals had made a profession of religion. This account is not exaggerated; the old man is living, and there are a thousand living witnesses to this testimony."

If the facts in these two statements were possible in two separate communities, and if actualized through the efforts of Christians, single handed, how much more ought we to expect them through the combined efforts of all Christians, in the community.

#### THE REASON WHY.

Let me illustrate why any savable sinner will yield, if pressed to the utmost, before he reaches a state of heart, in which, his final choice seals his eternal doom. In the state prison there is a scheme on foot to break prison. The prison keeper gets wind of it and learns who is the leader in the plot, and demands of the prisoner that he reveal to him the whole scheme. The prisoner declares his absolute ignorance, and absolute innocence, of any such scheme. He is taken into the yard and the keeper says to him, "You know all about this matter, and you must tell me all about it." The prisoner swears to his innocence. The hose is turned on his almost nude form, and the stream of death chills him to the marrow of his bones. The hose is turned off, and the demand of the keeper is renewed. The prisoner still,



vehemently, protests his innocence. The hose is again turned on for five minutes, and the prisoner, in his inmost purpose to conceal the plot, begins to weaken and says to himself: "I can't stand this much longer. It will kill me." The hose is turned off again, and the demand is renewed. Still the prisoner declares his innocence, in hope of escape. The third time the hose is turned on him, and soon he throws up his hands, in complete surrender. *Mark*, he had the power to stand there until he should have dropped dead in his tracks, for he is a free-agent; but rather than die, he voluntarily surrenders. Just so with the sinner, upon whom God's claims are pressed—whose conviction is an awful hell.

#### A HELL OF CONVICTION.

A poor infidel drunkard, with such a hell of conviction within him, exclaimed: "No other sinner can have sinned so damnably as I have sinned! No hell can be worse than I endure! O, that I could sleep and never wake again!"

#### ANOTHER INSTANCE.

Elizabeth Adamson, of England, whose sense of guilt and condemnation, when convicted for sin, she declared, as compared to racking pains of body: "A thousand years of this bodily suffering, and ten thousand more joined, are not to be compared to a quarter of an hour of my *soul* trouble." How long will a sinner resist such conviction?

#### THE DESPERATE REBEL CONQUERED.

Seemingly, the Holy Spirit, sometimes, almost *compels* sinners to yield. This power of the Spirit becomes the power of God's people, by

endowment. During the revival at Utica, New York, under the conduct of Mr. Finney, a Mr. Weld, a young man of great influence in the place, became bitterly opposed to the meeting. He was determined not to hear Mr. Finney preach. Sunday morning he went to church, expecting the pastor would preach. However, Mr. Finney preached, taking for his text: "One sinner destroyeth much good." The preacher drew a vivid picture of Mr. Weld, and he was pierced by the sharp arrows of truth. Monday night he spent in his room, alternately walking his room and lying on the floor in agony, angry, rebellious, and yet, so convicted that he could scarcely live. Just at day-break, while walking back and forth in his room, he said a pressure came upon him that crushed him to the floor, and with it came a voice that seemed to *command* him to repent, and repent *now*. He said it broke him down to the floor, and there he lay till late in the morning; his aunt coming up found him on the floor, calling himself a thousand fools, and, to all appearances with his heart all broken to pieces. He was soon converted.

#### ANOTHER STRIKING CASE.

Mention is made of a strikingly similar case, in a very old book, entitled: "The Holy Bible," of one called "Saul of Tarsus," "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;" and with letters of authority to Damascus, from the high priest, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. "And as he journeyed he came near

Damascus, and, suddenly, there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him : Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? \* \* And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened he saw no man, but they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Did the faith of the Church for deliverance from their bloodthirsty persecutor overcome their foe? Did he yield to be saved? It is stated that the Lord said to Ananias : "Go thy way," to the house where this smitten sinner is suffering the pangs of hell, and instruct him how to be saved, for, "behold he prayeth." "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house and putting his hands on him said : Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith and arose and was baptized." How long will sinners resist such conviction? If God convicted *one*, or more sinners thus, can't He convict any sinner thus? Has a sinner ever been thus convicted who did not yield, if God's people maintained the victory of faith, as in the instances just mentioned?

#### THE MOST HOPELESS SURRENDER.

In 1857, during the great awakening that began in New York, Christians had such power with God, that when they united to pray for any particular sinner, he was sure to be converted. The

most hopeless and forbidding, apparently, were brought under its almighty power and saved. Men felt impelled to pray, seemingly, by an *irresistible* impulse. The union of Christians, engaged so intensely, in intercessory prayer struck the ungodly with *amazement*, and brought them to their knees in penitence.

WHAT HAS BEEN MAY BE AGAIN.

The power of the Holy Ghost has, in many instances, operated to that degree, that as hardened savable sinners as live, this moment, have been saved. If the hardest of the hardened, have once been saved in answer to the prayer of faith, why not again? Sinners *are* free-agents, and the sinners who have been saved (in these meetings) are free-agents, and yet, they have been saved from *choice*, because they *wished* and *consented* to be saved.

Because some sinners have resisted unto their eternal damnation is no evidence that the prayer of faith might not have been offered for them, if not in *after* life, in *early* life.

MAY THE SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER OF FAITH BE LOST?

"If the prayer of faith is once offered, in behalf of a sinner, can that sinner be eternally lost?" Yes, if doubt gets into the hearts of Christians, but not if the victory of faith is maintained. He *cannot* because he *will* not.

NO COMPULSION.

"But," says one, "that is practically compelling the sinner to be saved." Then every sinner who has ever been saved has been practically compelled to be saved, for every sinner who **has ever** been saved, has been so

pressed, by the Holy Ghost, in answer to the prayer of faith, and so pressed by the Church, that he yielded. "But," says another, "that is practically relieving the sinner of responsibility." Then, every sinner who has ever been saved, has been practically relieved of responsibility. Nay, so far is the sinner from being relieved of all responsibility that he is *compelled* to decide his *own* eternal destiny—to determine whether heaven shall be his home, or hell his prison forever and ever. If you can persuade a voter, as you may, to leave his political party before he becomes so wedded to his party that he cannot be persuaded to change his relations, is that compelling him to change his relations? Is that practically relieving him of responsibility? No one will say it is, either. If you can persuade as you may, a sinner to leave the Devil's party before he becomes so wedded to the party that he cannot be persuaded to change his relations, is that compelling him to change his relations? Is that practically relieving him of responsibility? No one will say it is, either.

AS THE SINNER NEARS "THE DEAD LINE;" WHAT?

What about the prayer of faith for the sinner, just as he reaches, or is about to reach, the irreversible point in moral obduracy? If faith for his salvation is perfect, before he reaches that point, he will not reach it, and of course will be saved. If he reaches it before faith for his salvation is perfect, of course he is eternally damned, and faith cannot be exercised for his salvation. The Holy Spirit will help us to pray for a sinner until the sinner reaches the point of

irreversible moral obduracy, but when that point is reached the ministries of the Holy Ghost, for that sinner, forever cease.

A PROPER VIEW OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

This gives us a proper view of the responsibility of Christians, regarding the salvation of sinners, and, never until Christians understand, and will *meet* their obligations, by the grace of God, will this world be brought to repentance. Until the sinner is so pressed, by the Holy Ghost, in the efforts of the Church, that he either yields and is saved, or resists unto his irrevocable damnation, there is *still* a fearful responsibility on the Church regarding his salvation, as well as upon himself. If he yields, and is saved, the responsibility of the Church ceases, as to his *conversion*. If he rejects his *last* call the responsibility of the Church forever ceases, as far as any effort to save him is concerned.

EVERY CHILD-SINNER MAY BE BROUGHT TO  
REPENTANCE.

Whether, or not, prayer may prevail for the salvation of any sinner, depends on the *time* in his life, or the *degree* into which he has gone into sin, when the prayer is offered. There can be no question, I think, as to whether any *child*-sinner, say at the age of eight, or ten, can be brought to repentance. The power of prayer and Christian persuasion over the child may be absolute. A devoted Christian mother related to me the following. She had a little son, five years of age, who was a veritable little tiger. He was desperately willful and disobedient, and was more than a match for his mother. In her great grief, one

day, she went to her knees before God and asked in faith that God would change his nature. She prevailed and, without the child knowing anything of what his mother had done, he was changed from the tiger to the lamb, and ever since, to the time she related the fact to me, he had been an affectionate and dutiful child. If Christians would do their duty, is there a child, or youth, that could not be brought to Christ? If there is not, how *far* short have Christians come of their duty to God and the unsaved. Brethren, are we *dead* or *alive*?

## TRANSFERRED RESPONSIBILITY.

As the child advances in sin, if faith is not increased, the prayer of the parent, or Christian, loses more and more its power over the child till, by-and-by, that power is utterly and eternally lost. I have no question but that the Holy Spirit would help any Christian to offer the prayer of faith for any child. As to the salvation of the *child* the whole of the responsibility, practically, is upon the *Church*. As to the adult sinner, when the claims of the Gospel are so pressed upon him as to force him to a *final* decision—the supreme decision of his probationary life, and he says: I will not yield, the Church is relieved of all responsibility, as to any future action, and the sinner becomes *solely* responsible for the loss of his soul. Thus, as to the salvation of a soul, in the beginning of his probationary life, the responsibility is practically, entirely with the Church; while at the *close* of his probationary life it rests entirely with the probationer. Thus the responsibility is transferred, gradually from one to the other. You can

prevail for and with a child at the age of ten years, while, if he lives in sin seventy-five years, you may not be able to do so. You may prevail for, and with a sinner to-day, while you may not to-morrow. You might have prevailed for and with sinners one year ago, while you may not to-day. All may be saved if taken hold of by the Church in *time*. How great the responsibility of Christians! O, parents, what an incentive to drop upon our knees, this moment, and stay there, wrestling for our loved children, as for our own lives, lest to-morrow, nay, lest sixty minutes hence may be too late—*eternally too late!* Every day the child continues in sin, the greater the power of sin over him and, consequently, the less is the power in prayer over him, or the more difficult it becomes to offer the prayer of faith for his salvation.

Christian wife, whose husband is unsaved, other things being equal, the time for you to prevail most easily for his salvation is *now*. O, my God help us to seize upon the first—the *first* opportunity! O, how should *every* Christian wrestle for every undamned soul, within the reach of his prayers! If we can ever prevail in prayer for a sinner, we can *now*—and now easier, other things being equal, than at any future time. As the moments go by, our chances to prevail lessen, because the subject of our prayers grows harder in sin, and more confirmed. The power of sin over him increases every *moment!*

YES, IS THE ANSWER.

If the foregoing statements are true, then *yes* is the unqualified answer to the questions: "May



the prayer of faith be offered for any savable sinner? and, the prayer of faith, having been offered, may he be brought to repentance?

OBJECTION TO THE OBJECTOR'S OBJECTION.

But, says one, "I cannot accept that theory, because the sinner is a free-agent, and, he may resist all influences that may be brought to bear on him, and, hence, we cannot believe that he really will be saved. But, I'll tell you what I do believe. I believe that God is willing and able, to save all who will come to Him." I answer, thousands of *unsaved* men and women believe that God is willing and able to save *them*, and all *savable* sinners, if they will but come to Him, and the devils in hell believe the same; and that is as far as the faith of multitudes, in the Church, goes. Saul, and his army behind him, believed that God was *able* to give them the victory over their enemy, but David believed that he *actually would do it*! See the difference? How *few, exceedingly few*, when praying for a revival, basing their faith *solely on the Word of God*, believe that God will *actually* save sinners. We must distinguish between *belief*, common to men and devils, and a *real saving faith*. I ask the sinner: "Do you believe that God is *willing* to save you?" "Yes." "That He is *able* to save you?" "Yes." That is simply belief—a faith, in its nature, common to *all* men (the nature of the *belief*, of all men is the same, whatever be its object). As he grips the promise of God with all his mind and heart, I ask him: "Do you believe that God *saves you this moment*?" He joyfully answers:

"Yes." *That is faith.* It claims the *self-evidential* answer *now*.

YOU CAN'T BELIEVE FOR WHAT YOU CONCEDE MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE.

If your theory is correct, you can't believe that a single soul *will* be saved, and to pray that sinners may be *saved* is erroneous, and a *mockery* of God. Can you *believe* for what you *concede* may be *impossible*? How can you have faith that God *will* save sinners while you concede that they may choose *not* to be saved? How can you believe that God will *so* convict a sinner that he will yield, and be saved, while you *disbelieve* it? While there is a questioning, there is doubt, and, where there is doubt there is a want of adequate faith. Where there is an acknowledged possibility that sinners will *not* yield, there *cannot be faith* that they *will*. There *cannot* be faith while it is *conceded* that the effort *may be a failure*—that there is no *infallible* basis, upon which faith may rest and triumph.

ONE OR THE OTHER.

To be consistent you must take the ground, that it is *impossible* to believe that any sinner will *certainly* be saved; or, the ground, that faith may be exercised for the *certain* conversion of any *saveable* sinner. There is no intermediate ground. You can either believe, or, you cannot, that God *will* save sinners. If you simply pray God to convict sinners, you pray for what He has *already* done, and your prayer is *useless*.

If you pray God to *so* convict sinners that they will yield and be saved, that is *fully* equivalent to asking Him to *save* them. That is

conceding *all* I claim. It fully sustains the doctrine I teach; for, if the prayer of faith may be offered for one sinner, undamned, how do you know that it may not be offered for *any* sinner, undamned?

#### A DIFFICULTY IN YOUR WAY?

"But," you say, "some sinners are far more hardened and persistent in sin than others." True, but the convicting power of the Holy Ghost is absolutely *unlimited*, and, He can *so* help Christians to believe His Word, that they can believe for the *effectual* conviction of any *savable* sinner. Being omnipotent, He can as easily bring the wickedest sinner in the world to repentance, as the most yielding. Of course it requires a greater effort by the Church at the throne of grace.

#### THE THEORY UNWORTHY OF CONFIDENCE.

We may not believe that God will save sinners, independently of their *own* prayer of faith for pardon, but, we may, before the sinner is saved, "*know* that we *have* the petitions that we *desired* of Him"—the *answer* that the sinner *will be saved*. The millions of instances in which the prayer of faith *has* been answered for the *effectual* conviction of sinners, and, in which the Divine assurance, that they *would* be saved has been received, previously to the conversion of such sinners, prove the theory of the objector unworthy of confidence.

#### ADVICE.

My advice is that while you entertain your present theory never again to ask God to revive His work, for, you *cannot believe* for it, inasmuch as a revival always implies the *conversion* of sinners, and sinners are not mere machines, but free-

agents, and they *may not* yield, hence you cannot believe for a revival, because you cannot believe for what you concede may *not* be, and, *without* faith, it is impossible to please God; and, more, as a revival is conditioned on *faith* it cannot be had. Can we believe for a revival, or can we not? If we *cannot*, then let us stop mocking God, by asking Him for a revival. But, we all know that we *can* and *have* believed for a revival, and God's people have done so *millions* of times. To doubt the certainty of the possibility of a revival, or the certain conversion of sinners is to violate one of the *most* important conditions of a revival, and make it *impossible*. According to your theory you, or any one else, *cannot* believe for a revival, or that a single sinner will *ever* be saved, in *ALL time*, for, according to your theory you have no *evidence* that another sinner will ever yield and let God save him; and you can't believe for that, of which, you have *no evidence*. The Word of God only is the basis of faith, and if the Word of God does not warrant you in believing for the *absolutely certain effectual* conviction of sinners, you cannot *believe* for it, and hence, no sinner will *ever* be saved in answer to your prayer, for you *cannot* believe for a contingency, or an *uncertainty*, or for what may *not be*; you can only *hope* so, and that never brought a soul to Christ.

#### CONSISTENCY.

To be consistent you must put up a prayer something as follows: "O, Lord, *if* Thou canst revive Thy work I pray Thee do so. *If* sinners will yield their hearts to Thee, (I have no idea whether they *really* will or not) I pray Thee save

them." It's the old prayer of doubt: "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us;" to which the Lord Jesus answers "*If thou canst believe; ALL things are possible to him that believeth.*"

#### MAY FAITH FAIL OF ITS OBJECT?

But has not the prayer of faith been offered for a revival—*i. e.*, for the salvation of sinners, and, yet sinners were not saved? I answer most certainly; because unbelief got into the heart and crowded out faith, because the revival did not come as soon as was expected.

#### OBJECTOR'S THEORY AND PRACTICE CONTRADICTORY.

I wish to illustrate how your theory and practice contradict each other. A brother C., a local preacher assisting in a meeting, told me how, many years ago he had *received the answer* to his prayer for the conversion of his sister, two years *before* she was saved. He carried this assurance *all these two years*. In one of the meetings, in which I had said, that we could prevail with God to save sinners, if we would, this same brother, on his knees in prayer, told the Lord how that sinners were not mere machines and that if they did not wish to be saved we could not expect them to be saved. But, a few evenings after, in a meeting of great power, he exclaimed with great *vehemence*, and in the *most confident* tones: "We *know* that Thou wilt save! We *know* that Thou wilt save *to-night!*" The brother's *prayer* was *orthodox* but his *teaching* was *heterodox*.

#### WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?

How almost overwhelming the responsibility of Christians!! Who is sufficient for these things?

Only they who are mightily helped by God! If I may offer the prayer of faith for a sinner, and do not, then what?" But I have prayed and believed for the salvation of my husband, child, etc., and yet that loved one is not saved." If you have *really* offered the prayer of faith for your loved one, and *maintain* the victory of faith, your loved one will *certainly* be saved. A *measure* of faith, or a *partial* faith, is not enough. It must be complete for its object.

HOW SHALL WE MEET PRESENT RESPONSIBILITY?

Do you believe that it is the will of God that all the savable sinners in —— should be saved? Do you believe it is possible for the Holy Ghost to so convict any savable sinner in —— that he will gladly and freely yield his will to God's will to be saved? Do you believe that the Holy Ghost can so help us, as that we may prevail with God, by united prayer, so as to secure the operations of the Holy Ghost to that extent, that *one* soul will be saved? What do you say brethren? You *know* that it is possible! If for *one* why not for *two? Five? Ten? Twenty? Fifty? Why not?* Do you believe it possible for us to so prevail this afternoon in the behalf of sinners? Brethren, the only way for us to meet our present responsibility to God, and the unsaved, is to pay the price and prevail, *here and now!*

"Christ stood in the light, which my eye could not see,  
But a bright ray passed down from His Spirit to me;  
Wherever I wandered, 'twas with me, and when  
I prayed for a soul, it shed light on it then.

'I touch through thy hand,' said the Saviour to me,  
'And that which I touch shall never get free.

'Go, touch, then, the sinner—go whisper My word,  
Though thou canst not see Me, I'm there' saith the Lord."

## LECTURE XX.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER ; OR, WHAT FOLLOWS THE USE OF PRIESTLY PRIVILEGE AND POWER.*

In the first lecture on this subject I dwelt on the nature, privilege and power of intercessory prayer. In the second, I endeavored to answer the question : " May the prayer of faith be offered for any sinner who has not sinned away his day of grace ? " In this, the third lecture on intercessory prayer, I will present, mostly, illustrations of the power of intercessory prayer, and endeavor to answer the question : To what extent may Christians offer the prayer of faith for a community ? In other words, to what extent may a community be brought to repentance and salvation ?

#### SAUL OF TARSUS.

Following are given several illustrations of the power of intercessory prayer. There is no question in my own mind, as to whether, or not, Saul of Tarsus was stricken to the earth by the power of God, in answer to the prayers of the Church. Not that they asked deliverance from their relentless enemy, in the *mode* in which it came. So far as we know, under the dispensation of the Spirit, God the Father, never saves, but in answer to the triple intercession of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. Granted that this statement is correct, then Saul was brought to repent-

ance in answer to prayer. No person in Judea at the time of his conviction and conversion, attracted the attention, and engaged the solicitude of the Church, as did Saul of Tarsus. All eyes were turned toward him, as the most cruel and bloodthirsty of their enemies. The thought of Christians was largely upon him. Doubtless, his course was the topic of frequent conversation. How could these things be without calling to remembrance the injunction of the Master: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." It is impossible, consistently, to conceive that the Church did not pray for Saul of Tarsus, simply, because under such circumstances, to Christians, prayer is the natural, chief and most effective means of defence and support, and of the overthrow of their enemies. The same power that came on the day of Pentecost, in answer to prayer, that paralyzed the multitude of God's enemies, was the power that subdued the all but invincible Saul of Tarsus.

#### MOODY AND THE SCOTCH INFIDEL.

A few years ago, when Mr. Moody was in Scotland, in one of the services a friend pointed out to him a young Scotch infidel, who was president of an infidel club, and of whom Mr. Moody enquired: "Are you thinking about your soul?" The young skeptic replied: "How do you know I've got one?" Mr. Moody afterward said: "I thought it was no use trying, and then I thought; nothing is too hard for God. I asked him if I might pray for him." Said he: "You may pray



if you like. Try your hand on me." "I got down on my knees and prayed for him. His head was held up, and his eyes did not notice me, and he seemed to say to the people that my prayers did not affect him at all. For six long months prayers were offered daily, in the prayer meetings for this infidel. A little over a year afterward, I got a letter which stated, that the infidel was at the foot of the cross, crying for mercy. Soon after, he became the leader of a meeting, every night. Many of the members of the infidel club, of which he had been president, were converted."

A SEVEN-FOLD ANSWER.

When I was a boy at home, there came into the community, as an evangelist, a young woman, who received, among many other answers to prayer, that of which I shall now speak. As she went to her room one night, after the close of the service, there was begotten in her heart a wonderful spirit of prayer, for her six brothers and one sister, at home—all unsaved. The Holy Spirit pressed her to her knees, and, hour after hour, till three o'clock in the morning, when the sweet assurance came—the answer that God had saved them *all*. She was not disappointed when the next letter came from home, to hear, that indeed they were *all* saved—that very night, and saved while she wrestled on her knees, over one hundred miles away from home. While the Holy Spirit pressed her to pray in her room alone, and away from home, He also pressed the father of the unsaved children to pray for them too, and at the family altar, the burden for the salvation of his children became so great, that he could not get

rid of it, but by casting it on the Lord. O, what a heaven below, was that home, when father and all the children were saved and journeyed to the skies in blessed fellowship! The lady of whom I speak is the present wife of the Rev. H. D. Jordan of the Michigan Annual Conference of the M. E. Church.

A VERY WICKED HUSBAND SAVED.

The following statement, of a remarkable answer to prayer, was one in which I felt a deep interest, inasmuch as I was present when the answer was *realized*, in the conversion of a husband, for whose salvation his wife had prevailed with God. The answer was *received*, if I remember correctly, about two weeks before it was *actualized* in her husband's conversion. Sometime after, wishing to learn what I could of the experience of the lady, during the struggle for victory at the throne of grace, wrote her, asking the following questions. (1.) "Why did you not prevail with God for your husband's conversion *before* you did?" *Answer*.—"I think the reason I did not prevail with God sooner, was because I did not *believe* for it. I would get to looking *at his sins* and doubt." (2.) "Do you think you might have prevailed years before you did?" *Answer*.—"I do think I might have prevailed years ago if I had only known the *way* of believing, without so much doubting, or unbelief." (3.) "Did you ask God to convert him, or simply to *so* convict him that he would yield?" *Answer*.—"I asked God *both* to save and to convict until he could not rest—until he would yield." (4.) "Did you resolve on victory, at any cost?" *Answer*.—"I do not think

I resolved on victory, and yet, the cry of my soul was: 'Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me'; and for weeks this was the constant cry welling up from my soul. I was reading concerning the children of Israel and the promise: 'There shall not a hoof be left behind', took hold of me in such a way that I *knew* it was of the Lord, and that it was for *me*, and I was content. But the waves of intemperance were surging higher and higher, and threatening to sweep him away entirely, and I began to look for another promise. One day I was riding with my husband, and I had such a spirit of prayer for him that it seemed I would *literally die*. How I wept and prayed behind my veil, and, all in a moment, I felt, O, so gloriously happy! and the promise: 'Thou, and thy house, shall serve God', came sweeping into my soul, and I took hold of it, seemingly, with my *whole being*. Then I felt like shouting and praising God. I kept thinking; now will the Lord save him soon, or will I have to wait? So I resolved to prove Him. I therefore said: 'Lord, if he is to be saved in a week, or two, let him ask me to stop here to a Free Methodist meeting, (he did not like these people), and when we came to the church he said; 'I think we had better stay to the meeting to-night: Will you?' I, of course, said yes. I did not think he would be saved at this meeting, but felt confident he would soon yield, either at home, or at our church. Mrs. A. and I were talking about the meetings, and she asked: 'How do you feel about your husband? I thought a moment, and the Lord seemed to reveal to me, then and there, that he

would be saved yet that week, and I said: 'I feel that he will be saved yet this week', and he was. O, the assurance came to me instantaneously!"

#### THE INFIDEL DRUNKARD SAVED.

The following remarkable instance, of the power of united intercessory prayer, given by Rev. W. W. Patton, D. D., in his book on "Prayer and its Remarkable Answers," is of peculiar interest." A certain man was of Christian parentage, the son of an exceptionally devoted mother. He acquired an appetite for strong drink, from using it medicinally, became intemperate, abandoned his Christian hope and faith, and, to human judgment, was utterly abandoned of God. For twenty years, his Christian friends prayed for him, against all probabilities, and hoped against all evidences. A heavy affliction having befallen him, in consequence of his intemperate life, these friends hoped that it might be made the occasion of his deliverance. They asked for him the prayers of a company of Christian ladies, entire strangers to him. To this day he is unknown to them, in name or person. He lived three hundred miles distant from them. His history was detailed to them, and they resolved to concentrate prayer upon him, for a time, and see what God would do. They prayed specifically for his moral reform, for his conversion as a child of the covenant. They persisted in prayer, agreeing that each one should bear him on her heart, in secret communion with God. Among these ladies were some who have had a

remarkable experience of success in intercessory prayer.

The result is soon told. At about the time his case was first named to that praying circle, with no knowledge on his part that they were interested in him, he suddenly dropped the use of intoxicating drinks, and from that hour he has been absolutely free from the alcoholic craving. Within a week the cavils at religious doctrines ceased. Then his prejudice against Christian usages and people gave way. The coat of mail, which he had worn for twenty years, dropped from him, and his heart lay bare to the power of truth and of the Holy Spirit. His childhood's faith returned to him, freighted with the teachings, the songs, and the prayers of a sainted mother. Then followed a period of profound despair. 'No other sinner' said he 'can have sinned so damnably as I have sinned. No hell can be worse than I endure. O, that I could sleep and never wake again!' For ten days or more, this despair continued, prayer being made for him without ceasing. He seemed unable to pray for himself. He begged like a child to be taught how to pray. His locked lips were like a premonition of the retributive speechlessness of guilt at the day of judgment." He was gloriously saved.

TO WHAT EXTENT MAY FAITH AND WORKS BRING A  
COMMUNITY TO CHRIST?

This is no idle, or unimportant question. Upon the view we take of it hangs, directly, and indirectly, eternal destinies, for weal or woe. If we take the view that, *comparatively*, Christians are

almost wholly irresponsible for the salvation or damnation of sinners—that sinners are almost entirely responsible for their own salvation, or damnation; then Christians will care but little, whether sinners will be eternally saved or eternally damned. But if it is seen, that *if* Christians will put forth all reasonably possible effort to bring sinners to Christ, that all savable sinners *may* be converted, then there will be such a *realization* of the responsibility of Christians as will lead them to put forth such effort.

#### ONE AGAINST THE MULTITUDE.

The late Rev. J. T. Iddings of the Michigan Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, gave me the following facts. While serving a Church in the State of Indiana, before he came to Michigan, a lady came to him and asked him to go and conduct a special service in the community where she lived—a rural district. She had prayed long and earnestly that God would save her neighbors, and God had assured her that he would. She said to Mr. Iddings: “There is a Universalist family of twelve, who are the most influential family in the neighborhood. If they can be saved first, then their neighbors will follow.” The meeting began on a Monday evening. Before the first service closed thirty came forward, as seekers, and *twelve* of the thirty were the members of the *Universalist* family! Just before the close of the service that night this praying woman, in her testimony said with a joyful heart: “I *knew* in whom I had trusted! I *knew* that God would do the work!” The work went on for five consecutive nights and

seventy-two were converted. *Wonderful?* Yes, there were at least *two* wonderful facts in this case. One was that the *entire Church* in that community (that lone Christian woman) was *entirely* consecrated to God, and had great faith in, and great power with God. The other fact was that so many were saved in so short a time, but the last named fact naturally followed the first one stated. Let *all* Christians in *any* community do as this one Christian woman did and how long would it be till there would not be a savable sinner left in the community? I repeat: How long? That all Christians are *not* thus consecrated, has no weight against the belief that every savable sinner might thus, speedily, be saved if all Christians were consecrated. Is the responsibility of Christians to be measured by what they *do* do, or by what they *may* do? *Possibility is the measure of responsibility!*

ALL SAVED EXCEPT THREE.

While assisting in a special service in Hubbardston, Michigan, a brother Banty, related to me, that in a farming community in which he had formerly lived, a revival service was conducted by Evangelist Higgins, of Detroit, in harvest time, in which *all* the ungodly, within an area of three miles, were converted, *except three*.

ALL SAVED.

A few years, ago at the German Methodist camp-meeting at Lake Side, Ohio, it is said that *every* unconverted person in attendance had been converted. The people brought with them their children and friends, *for many miles*, for the *express* purpose of having them converted. The above

was stated in one of the *Advocates* of the M. E. Church.

ANOTHER STRIKING INSTANCE.

Dr. Savage, who is at the head of the band movement in Canada, told me that in a small burg, in Canada, about four hundred were converted in, if I remember correctly, about two weeks, and that on one street, or highway, for five miles, there could not be found an unsaved person.

STILL ANOTHER REMARKABLE CASE.

Dr. Labaree, many years president of Middlebury College, related to Rev. B. Fay Mills, the following, of a student in the college, so limited in mental capacity as not to have been able to pursue the course of study successfully, either in the college, or theological seminary; but who was full of faith and power. There came a call from a woman, in a certain God-forsaken place. Said she: "I am the only person in this town who believes in God. We have no Bibles, no Sabbath, no God. Can you not send some one to us from your seminary, who will preach to us the Word of life?" "No one of the students wanted to go, except this man, and he thought it was just the thing for which he had been waiting. The Professors did not know whether to license him, or not, but they finally concluded that he could not do a great deal of harm in six months; so he was licensed for six months, and sent into the town. He died soon after, but—I give you this on the word of president Labaree—he did not die till he had won to Jesus Christ *every man and woman*



*and child in that township, with the exception of one man, and he moved away soon after.*

## A FIFTH.

Of Tranquillity Methodist Church, near Brantford, Canada, about forty years ago, there were left but six or seven members, and the conclusion had been reached to disband and attend service in Brantford. Some young people joined their prayers and personal efforts, led by Rev. Timothy Edwards, now of the Detroit Conference, Michigan. In the beginning of the special service a considerable number asked prayers, and the work went on till within an area of about four miles, every youth and adult sinner was saved, except two Catholic families, and doubtless they might have been converted, if not already Christians, had the faith of God's people compassed their salvation, as it might have done. The above statement was related to me by Mr. Edwards himself.

## IF ONE, WHY NOT ANOTHER ?

If one community can be, and *has been* brought to Christ, then on the *same* principles, and by the *same* means another can be. If one then all, for all are but the aggregate of individual communities. Wherever Christians become fully aroused to their responsibility, privilege and power, the community is thus brought to Christ. It seems to me that we must take this position, or that of the objector, as stated in lecture nineteen.

## THE GOOD TIME COMING.

The time is coming when *all* shall know the Lord. How will that be reached? Answer: By a *universal* consecration of Christians to God. Then the Spirit will be poured out a hundred

times more abundantly. The Holy Spirit is always poured out in proportion to the complete and universal consecration of Christians. If the prayer of intercession were generally offered, the result would be a general outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and hence, a general ingathering of souls.

THE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CASE.

The responsibility of Christians, as to the salvation of the sinner, remains in force until the sinner, either surrenders to God and is saved, or by a final decision places himself forever beyond the reach of mercy.

But, you say, this places an awful responsibility on Christians. Yes, truly, there is an awful responsibility on Christians, and I solicitously inquire : How great is this responsibility ? Where does the responsibility of Christians, as to sinners, begin ; and where does it end ? Where does that of sinners begin and end ? How are they related ? What are their proportions and degrees ? Paul says : "As we have therefore *opportunity*, let us do good unto *all men*." Let me illustrate. The inebriate, who, in a drunken stupor, has laid himself down on the track of the on coming limited express, is responsible if he is torn to shreds, by the maddened fury, as it shrieks and thunders over his body, for *once* he was a *sober, sensible* man. Yet, *I* am *just* as responsible, if, *seeing* and *realizing* his awful peril, and *have it in my power to save him*, as though *no* responsibility were upon *him*. If he be crushed, while I make no effort to save him, his blood is on *my* hands just as if an innocent helpless infant were lying on its back in the pathway of the ponderous

engine, and because of my *wilful* neglect to save it, it is ground to atoms.

Of course, the sinner is responsible, as far as his own act is concerned, for *not* being saved, and for being dead in trespasses and in sins, for he died by his *own* wicked hand. *Every child is a child of God*, "for of *such* is the kingdom of heaven;" and, until, by wicked works, he departs from the living God, he *remains* the subject of saving grace.

While the sinner, having come to years of responsibility, is responsible to the degree, that, if he *finally* rejects salvation he may be justly consigned to eternal death: yet, as far as we have opportunity to do good unto all men, as far as it is possible for us to prevail in prayer in in their behalf—as far as it is possible for us to appeal to them, or influence them in any way, in public or in private, consistently with other duties, we are responsible to God and must answer in the judgement! O, God help us!

"Perchance, in heaven some day, to me  
Some blessed saint will come and say:  
'All hail! Beloved, but for thee,  
My soul to death had fallen a pray.'  
And oh! what rapture in the thought;  
One soul to glory, to have brought!"

## LECTURE XXI.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, AND PERSONAL EFFORT; OR, FAITH ALONE SAVES, BUT NOT THE FAITH THAT IS ALONE.*

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENTS.

Prayer and works must go arm in arm, as John (9. 31,) says: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and *doeth* His will him He heareth." Here *prayer* and *doing* are linked together. James says (2. 17): "Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being *alone*. Yea, a man may say: Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith, without thy works, and I will show thee my faith, *by my works*; for, as the body, without the spirit, is dead; so faith without works is dead also. Seest thou how *faith* wrought with his (Abraham's) *works* and by *works* was *faith* made perfect?" By the teaching of the parable, found in Luke (14: 16-24), we are commanded to "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." The *great* lesson of the Scriptures, that I have read to you, is *personal* effort. We cannot lay too much stress on prayer, but, we may pray, only, till doomsday, and *nothing* will be *done*! Sinners are not converted by direct contact with the Holy Ghost, but, by being brought into contact with witnesses for Christ, whose testimony, is *truth*, presented "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The *prayer*

of faith, and works, are *one*. The *prayer of faith* is *the* work, in which, *all works are embodied*, as the flower and fruitage, are embodied in the bud.

## ONE BY ONE.

The very appropriate remarks from the pen of Rev. T. L. Cuyler, are very much to the point. "When a lad I used to join in the apple gatherings in the ripe month of October. The common fruit, which was destined to the cider-press or the swine, was shaken from the trees, and no amount of bruising did any harm. But the choice pippins and Spitzenbergs, which were destined for the apple bins, were carefully picked by hand. Those were gathered one by one; we intended that they should *keep* through the winter.

This process illustrates the only effectual method for the conversion of souls. 'Ye shall be gathered *one by one*,' was the declaration made to God's people in the olden time. The Lord declares that in the time of the purification and restoration of Israel he would gather in his grain, seed by seed; each seed should be tested, and not a single one overlooked or one genuine kernel be lost. This emphasizes the fact that in God's sight there is no such thing as 'the masses.' God sees only *individuals*; every one unlike every other, and every one the possessor of an immortal soul. Guilt is an individual thing appertaining to a personal conscience; when a nation sins, or when a Church goes astray, it simply means that there are a great many personal sinners. Nor are sinners saved by regiments. When three thousand were converted in a single day at Jerusalem, each one repented for himself,

each one came into personal union with the risen Christ.

No fact is more patent on the face of the book of the Acts than that it is the record, chiefly, of individual labors for the conversion and the spiritual training of individuals. Those first Christians were men and women who understood thoroughly their personal responsibility, and the power of personal effort. Find, if you can, the appointment of a single 'committee' in the book of the Acts. Seven men were, indeed, designated to the work of dispensing charities to the poor; but this was done in order to release the others for personal labor in declaring the Word of Life. Very little is said about Church organizations. Nothing was allowed to keep man from man—the individual believer from the individual sinner. Peter goes right after Cornelius; Philip talks directly to Queen Candace's treasurer; Aquila and Priscilla have a great Bible class in the person of eloquent Apollos; and Dorcas is a sewing society in herself. Amid all the conventions and 'union meetings,' and endless talk about revivals, is there not danger that each Christian may forget that he or she is the bearer of *one lamp*? And if that lamp be well filled with grace, and its light be lovingly thrown on one sinners's path, more good will be accomplished than by a whole torch-light procession out on parade. A crowd is often in the way when a soul is to be rescued. Christ led a deaf man out of the crowd when he wished to deal with him alone. Those early Christians wrought wonders for God and dying humanity, but they accomplished it by the simple

direct method—*every man to his man*. Personal holiness made each worker a partner with the Omnipotent Jesus.

As I recall my own ministerial experience, I can testify that nearly all the converting work done has been by personal contact with souls. For example, I once recognized in the congregation a new-comer, and at my first visit to his house was strongly drawn to him as a very noble-hearted, manly character. A long talk with him seemed to produce little impression; but before I left, he took me up stairs to see his three or four rosy children in their cribs. As we stood looking at the sleeping cherubs, I said to him ‘My friend, what sort of a father are you going to be to these children? Are you going to lead them towards heaven, or—the other way? That arrow lodged. At our next communion season he was at the Master’s table, and he soon became a most useful officer in the Church. There is an unbolted door in about everybody’s heart, if we will only ask God to show us where to find it.”

HOW FEW, TO EITHER PRAY PREVAILINGLY, OR WORK  
FOR SOULS.

It is one thing to *get the answer*, that God will save a soul and, unless saved at once, as is sometimes the case, it is another thing to bring that soul to Christ. Yet, how few, comparatively, who are ready either to offer the prayer, or do the personal work, as will appear from the following statements from, to me, an unknown pen:

“In spite of all that has been written and shown to prove that the Gospel is making prodigious advances among men it still remains true that an

examination of the Year Books of the different denominations shows a painfully small number of men added to the Lord by confession. We will suppose that the two largest denominations in this country—namely, the Methodist and the Baptist, should report an addition of twenty thousand each, by conversion. The aggregate would seem large; but when we remember the number of their Churches and pastors, it shows that there is scarcely one soul for a Church and pastor combined. But should they report an hundred thousand, that would be but five souls or less, per Church. To report one soul is at once to confess a shameful and sad lack of power. What must be the spiritual state of that Church and pastor whose combined testimony and effort has resulted only in persuading one soul, or perchance two or three, to be reconciled to God? We will say that the Church has one hundred members. Then we have one hundred sermons, and the individual effort and combined testimony of one hundred Christians, and the result is, one or two, or a half dozen souls saved. But suppose we put the average as high as ten, which is far beyond the facts in the case of the Churches throughout the country. Even that average would be low. It does seem as if there were grave defects in our Church life and methods, if the combined effort of an hundred people, under the leadership of a devout pastor, can accomplish no more than this.

It may be urged, as it invariably is, when this subject is to be brought to the attention of the Churches, that the Church has something else to



do than seek the conversion of souls; that a pastor has even more important work than winning souls to Christ. When we ask what is that more important work, we usually get the answer: 'The Church has to be built up, and Christians trained and edified.' But what kind of training and edification is that which year after year does not increase the spiritual efficiency of the Church, and lead more and more to the salvation of men? The fact is that nothing which can be said will excuse the ministry and the Church from the responsibility of the comparative fruitlessness of our work in conversions. We are very guilty. It is mere evasion when we seek to make it appear that it is not the main work of the Churches to win men and women to Christ from the world, the flesh and the Devil. The great charter under which the Church is organized, and the great commission under which the preacher preaches, is 'Go make disciples.' The truth is that the conversion of men is secondary in the practical aim of most Churches and ministers. We are bound to believe this from results shown, for we cannot believe that if Church and pastor were set to win souls, and were unitedly calling upon God to this end, pleading his promises and working and walking in the power of the Spirit, there would not come a harvest beside which the poor showing of our Churches to-day would seem insignificant and paltry.

The reasons for this poverty of results are not far to see, at least some of them. During the great meetings conducted by Mr. Moody in Boston, some ten years since, the pastor who was

chairman of the inquiry room work, called upon a pastor asking him to designate half a dozen men from his congregation (one of the largest in Boston), who might be relied upon to do personal work with anxious souls. He replied that he deeply regretted that he did not know so many men as that in his Church whom he thought could do that work. 'The fact is,' he said, 'our people are not trained to do that kind of work. We hold that the conversion of souls is the work of the ministry through the ordinary preaching of the Word of God and the sacraments.' After a while he named *one* gentleman who he thought might be able and willing to engage in such kind of service. Whether purposely or not it seems to be true, that it is still a fact that, as a rule, laymen are not trained, nay, not even taught to do personal work for souls; or if they are taught to do so from the pulpit, the teaching is without power, for there are the fewest number of laymen who do anything in this direction."

The Rev. D. Curry, D. D., speaking of Dr. Peck's signal success in soul winning, said: "Among the remarkable things stated by Dr. Peck (in his quarter-centennial sermon), is, that of his thousands of converts he became *personally* acquainted with *nearly every one* of them, usually before their conversion, having conversed with them in *private* before they *publicly* became seekers of salvation. Is not this the secret?" The above being true, Dr. Peck is qualified to speak on this subject of personal effort as but few are.

## THE METHOD IN PERSONAL WORK.

On the subject of method in personal effort, I cannot do better than to give the substance of what Dr. Peck has said in several newspaper articles, quoting his words in part.

God's method in soul saving is in the great commission: "*Go ye.*" We have been singing too long, "*Hold the Fort!*" We want more men and women who move on the enemy's ranks. Sitting down, in our comfortable pews, and felicitating ourselves on our goodly inheritance, while souls all around us are dropping into eternal burnings, with no earnest pleadings to save them, is a *selfish travesty*; a mocking burlesque of genuine Christianity. When we are filled with the love of Christ we cannot do this. When we put on the whole armor of God, our *feet* are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and we shall be walking evangelists.

## WISDOM AND TACT NEEDED.

"He that winneth souls is wise." There is nothing in all the range of human influence that demands more wisdom, tact and versatility in expedients, than in capturing the judgment, conscience and will of man to the obedience of Christ. There are Christians who have "a zeal, but not according to knowledge." My design is to "feather" their arrows that they may go straight to their mark.

## HAND TO HAND AND HOUSE TO HOUSE.

The best preaching that the pastor and Christians can do, is, this house to house and hand to hand work, pleading personally and in tears with sinners, and leading them back, as lost sheep. It

may be made the most effective preaching. In public preaching services the sinner may lose, in a measure, among the crowd, his sense of responsibility and peril, but when alone with an earnest Christian, full of faith and power, and who understands how to use the "Sword of the Spirit," he is cornered, and if honest, will surrender.

THE ENEMY'S RANKS MUST BE BROKEN.

The more we make it a hand to hand contest, the greater the triumph. This work is the best for Christians. It will drive them to God for wisdom and grace. It will bring them to feel their need of the Holy Ghost, and seek Him. Prayer will become intense and *agonizing*. God, and heaven, and hell, and sin, and eternity will become *real, vivid, awful*, awakening verities. Throbbing with the conviction of these tremendous realities, we shall speak of them with power on the conscience of the careless and unsaved.

THE APPEAL SHOULD BE STRICTLY PRIVATE.

Both parties will be more at ease. The sinner will be more frank and candid, and feel himself compelled to be respectful. Approach the sinner cautiously, yet, with ease and nerve. Learn before hand, as much as possible, of the peculiarities of the person. Draw his fire. For a time let him talk all he wishes to, till you learn his whereabouts, arguments and defenses. Be tender and yet faithful. He is in error, and if you watch your chances, you can make him see that he arrays himself against admitted truths. Don't be Pharisaic, admitting that you are no better than he, but by the grace of God. Avoid severity. Harshness impels men to turn and fight. This

must be avoided. Do not engage in argument. Strike for the conscience. That is always on your side. Keep on the main track. He will switch you off on side issues, if he can. Win, and keep his good will. Draw him to you in spite of himself.

Skillfully use the "Sword of the Spirit," and this only. Do not take a Bible under your arm, but have it sheathed under your tongue. Do not tell him what you believe, but what : "*Thus saith the Lord.*" This will cut to the heart. If you can, repeat some experience to the point ; usually it will have a telling effect. Sinners are often *secretly* sincere inquirers, but densely befogged. Usually, their *defenses* do not come from their *hearts*. Assume that your friend does not really believe in his *heart*, *all* that he may say. If possible, get him to admit this. If he will, you have broken down his defense. Show him the simple truth of the Bible way of coming to Christ. Of course *we* must have a clear understanding of that way, or we cannot make the way plain to the sinner. There are just two steps to be taken, that the sinner may be saved : the first is absolute surrender, or giving up to God ; the second is believing with all the heart, "*nothing wavering,*" that God the Father, *does*—not *will*—does *now* forgive for the sake of Christ, who purchased pardon for the believing penitent. "Giving the will to God is giving the heart to God." Repeat some promise. Encourage the sinner to take hold of it by a loving trust.

MAKE THIS PRIVATE INTERVIEW A SIEGE.

Plan for time enough to stay till the soul sur-

renders, Do not be put off with a flimsy promise; "I will think about it, I will consider the matter." This is usually a ruse to get out of your grip. Don't let them slip out of your hands, redouble the attack as he twists and wriggles. Conscience, truth and the Holy Ghost are on your side. If one mode of attack does not succeed, immediately try another. Have omnipotent faith and persistence! The gentlest manner and kindest tones must be employed, but with *unyielding* firmness. The glove may be soft as silk, but the grasp must be as strong as a vise. I cannot put into language the tremendous importance of this personal work. There are many persons who can be reached in no other way. They will not come to the meeting, until they are captured and committed. Some of the strongest men and women can be helped by personal conversation to a Christian life, who would withstand public appeals. When committed to begin seeking they will come to the meeting. Then their conversion and testimony add momentum to the work. One reached in this way opens the door to a family or neighbor.

This is the work of the *laity* as well as of the pastor. Make a list of the names of those whom you want to see saved and for whom the Holy Spirit helps you to pray. First, pray in faith for their salvation, and then "go for them," in *God's* strength. The current of God's love sets in toward the sinner; get into this current and you will be carried to the sinner as naturally as the needle turns to the pole. Deliberately resolve that the lost *must* be saved; and to this work you will give your life; not that all your time and energies

are to be given *directly* to soul saving, but that this shall be the *great* end of life to you; and that all things in your life shall be subservient to this great purpose. It is *inhuman* to be indifferent, and *criminal* to be negligent.

You have the *ability* to do this work, if consecrated unreservedly to God's will and work. Have you the *disposition*? If not ask *yourself* the question: 'Am *I* really, truly saved? Have I the love of Christ in *my* heart that constrained Him to *die* for sinners? If I have then *why* do I not love, and care, and sacrifice, and work for sinners, like my Master?

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

One pastor got ten men and twenty women to take up this work prayerfully and earnestly. The next Sabbath there were fifty-seven persons at church, who had not been accustomed to attend, as the *direct* fruit of that work. The next Sabbath there were a hundred and fifty strangers present, and at the close of the evening service, twenty of them arose for prayers.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

During the Civil War, a band of recruits boarded an out-going train. They were very profane. A Mrs. B. with her two boys were on the train. She shuddered on account of her two boys, as the recruits seemed to vie with each other in profanity. After the profane jesting had continued an hour or so, a little girl, seven or eight years of age, who with her mother, was sitting in front of the party, could stand the profanity no longer, and, timidly stepping out of her seat and going to the ringleader of the

group, a young man whose countenance indicated considerable intelligence, she presented him with a small Bible. As she laid the good Book in his hand, she raised her soft blue eyes to his, but without saying a word, went back to her seat. The party could not have been more completely hushed if an angel had silenced them. Not another oath was heard, and scarcely a word was spoken by them during the remainder of the journey. The young man, who had received the Bible, seemed particularly impressed. He got out of the car, at the next station, and purchased a paper of candy for his little friend. He then stooped and kissed her, and said he would always keep the Bible for *her* sake. The child was so troubled, by their profanity, that she could not rest till she had given him her own little Bible that she so highly prized.

#### BACKING THE LITTLE CRIPPLE.

Little Samuel made it a practice to invite every child he met, who did not belong to a Sabbath school, to attend. He one day found a boy who was so lame that he could not walk and asked him if he would not be glad to attend Sabbath school. The boy replied yes, but I am so lame I cannot walk. My father is dead, my brother is gone to sea, and I have nobody to carry me. O, I will carry you, said Samuel, I will come for you every Sabbath, and bring you home again. I should like to do it. I'll carry you on my back; you are not very heavy, and I had a great deal rather than not. Every Sabbath morning Samuel was seen carrying the lame boy to Sabbath school on his back.



CLINTON B. FISK AND W. D. FARWELL.

The conversion of the late W. D. Farwell, a dry goods merchant, and a member of Forsyth Street M. E. Church, New York, is said to have occurred on this wise: Some ten years ago, as Mr. Farwell was walking up Fifth avenue, he was met by General Fisk. After the customary greetings the latter said, "You ought to be a Christian." "I know it," was the reply; "I wish I were a Christian." "Are you ready to become a Christian now?" was the soldierly and prompt inquiry that followed. "I am," said the equally prompt and decided business man. Immediately Mr. Farwell accepted the invitation of his friend to unite with him in prayer for present salvation. They repaired to General Fisk's room, and in less than thirty minutes from the commencement of the interview Mr. Farwell was rejoicing in the light and liberty of the sons of God. This suggests that multitudes might be converted if Christians were only ready to speak the word in due season.

He who would prevail with God in prayer must *unconditionally* surrender himself *to do the work God gives him to do*.

CLOSING APPEAL.

A fervent appeal to Christians to go out and compel sinners to come in is made by the Rev. F. Merrick, D. D., as follows: "Man has interests high as heaven, deep as hell, enduring as eternity. He is a sinner and must be forgiven, or perish forever. He is corrupt, and must be renewed, or never see the face of God in peace. Forgiven and renewed, he may glorify and enjoy God,

He may know a peace that passes understanding and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Even for this world he may secure for himself a hundred-fold more than the worldling, and in the world to come *life everlasting*. And what is that? 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' — eternal blessedness — all possible good, and that forever. He may be hopelessly lost, or saved with the power of an endless life.

Reader, are you a professed disciple of Christ, a member of His Church? If so, it is presumable that you believe these great, far-reaching truths. Will you pause here a moment and think what they involve? Think what it is to be eternally lost and what to be saved. Can you measure the depths of perdition or the heights of glory? The one or the other is to be the destiny of each and all. With these truths before the mind, let me ask in great seriousness, but in all kindness, Is your life altogether consistent with a belief of these momentous truths? Bring your thoughts, your aspirations, your purposes and pursuits into the presence of these truths. Do they harmonize? Is there peaceful accord? If so, most blessed is your state. Stand fast in this Gospel liberty, and a glorious future is assured.

But if otherwise, what then? The truths are immutable. They are as unchangeable as the pillars of God's throne. They cannot be conformed to an unholy life. The life must be conformed to them. There is but one way of peace and safety. What that way is, none need mistake. Entire consecration is what God and our own good demand. The question is, will we take this

way? Will we make the consecration? Are we ready to part with the offending eye, or hand, or foot? Shall there in all things arise the honest inquiry, 'Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?' And will we *do* what He requires?

But not for ourselves alone are we to live. In the light of these same truths, are we doing what we should for others? Multitudes throng the broad road. In that throng may be found our neighbors, our associates, and perhaps members of our own families. If not, they still are our fellow beings, hastening to the judgment seat. Momentarily some are dropping out of hope. What are we doing to save these perishing souls? What am I doing? What are you doing? What is the Church doing? O, ye who minister at God's altars, what are ye doing? Can nothing more be done to save the purchase of the Redeemer's blood? Must these souls perish for whom Christ died? Shall the things of time crowd out the thoughts of eternity and eternal interests? May God awaken us to a proper sense of our own interests, and the well-being of the perishing multitude about us. The time is short. Eternity is at hand. Let us awake to the interests which are enduring."

#### SOWING AND REAPING.

The harvest dawn is near,  
 The year delays not long;  
 And he who sows with many a tear,  
 Shall reap with many a song.  
 Sad to his toil he goes,  
 His seed with weeping leaves;  
 But he shall come at twilight's close,  
 And brings his golden sheaves.

—George Burgess.

## LECTURE XXII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER OFFERED BY THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; OR, "OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD."*

#### INTRODUCTORY.

All prayer is summed up in : "Praying in the Holy Ghost." "For through Him (Christ) we both have access, *by one Spirit*, unto the Father." (Eph. 1:18).

The Holy Spirit is God's all comprehensive gift to man ; and to be filled with the Spirit is to possess all grace—all helpfulness. He is the Great Agent in man's redemption. The atonement would be worthless without His helpful operations. We are utterly incapacitated, of ourselves, to take a single step God-ward. His efforts in bringing us into spiritual life were great birth-throes. If our prayers are heard and answered they must be offered in the Holy Ghost as the apostle says : "Praying *in* the Holy Ghost." "Making supplication *in* the Spirit."

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

In John (14:16) Christ said : "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Advocate) that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth ; \* \* He will guide you into all truth and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." Paul in Romans (8:25, 27) writes : "Likewise the

Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not *what* we should pray for *as* we ought ; but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered ; and He (God) that searcheth the hearts (of men) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit (in His intercessions for us) because He (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Again, Paul says (1 Cor. 2:10, 11): "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God ; for what man knoweth the spirit of *man* save the *spirit* of man which is in him ? Even so the things of *God* knoweth no man, but the *Spirit* of God.

The Holy Spirit is expressly called our Advocate. He does the work of an advocate. He is said to make "*intercession* for the saints."

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT COMPETENT TO INTERCEDE.

The Holy Spirit being God is qualified to do the work of an advocate. He has all knowledge of God and man, hence, knows how to intercede with God for man. "The Spirit searcheth all things ; yea, the *deep* things of *God*," so that He knows God's will. Also, it is declared of the Father : "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit : " *i. e.*, as the Spirit helps our infirmities in prayer—helps us to pray for *what* we ought and *as* we ought.

#### THE MODE.

The mode of the Spirit's intercessional work is of a two-fold nature. (1.) He influences the soul of man by producing a sense of need and by inspiring in it the spirit of prayer for the supply of that need. The desire to pray is a

creation of the Holy Spirit. (2.) The Spirit helping our infirmities, and helping us to pray according to the will of God, the Father; the Father hears and answers the prayer of the Spirit, and of the praying soul. The Spirit makes the soul for whom He pleads, and within whom He pleads, the voice of His own intercession—His spokesman. The believer's own heart is the channel through which the prayer of the Spirit finds its way to the throne of the Father. Or, perhaps more properly, the Divinely begotten cry of the praying soul, and the intercessional prayer of the Spirit, so inter-penetrate and blend, that the two prayers are but one prayer, yet, the one prayer, *equally*, the prayer of the Spirit and of the praying soul. "The literal meaning is: He helpeth together with us. It expresses the action of one who helps another to do what he is unable to do without help." It does not supersede our personal effort but helps it out, supplying its deficiency. The Spirit makes intercession for us, not as our Lord Jesus Christ does in heaven, while pleading with the Father in our behalf, but by inspiring, framing, qualifying and directing our supplications to God. His prayer is an inner prayer within our prayer; a Divine voice within our voice. His intercession is the soul, of which our prayer is the body; so that God the Father who knows the mind of the Spirit, when He leads us to express ourselves in desires, words, groans, sighs, or tears, reads in each the language of His own Spirit, which is always in harmony with His own will. The spirit of prayer is the praying Spirit of God *Himself*, in the hearts of

His people ; and our power with God in prayer must always, in a great degree, be proportioned to the sense of our need of Divine assistance, that we feel and cherish ; the simplicity of our reliance on His agency, and the encouragements we give to His operations in our hearts. The Spirit Itself, maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. As we struggle to express in articulate language the desires of our hearts, we find that our deepest emotions are inexpressible, except by groans. The powerful intercession of the Spirit within us far surpasses articulate utterance, and the only approximate utterance that we can give is in groans. While these groanings are the only approximate utterance, possible, of our emotions, they are the intercession of the Spirit Himself in our behalf. God, who is the searcher of hearts, watches our unutterable emotions, and knows perfectly what the Spirit means by the groans which He draws forth within us ; for the Spirit pleads in our prayers, which he has inspired within us, only, for what God himself designs to bestow. The unutterable groan is big with meaning, and God understands it, because it contains the language of His own Spirit. These desires which are greater than human language come from the Father, by His Agent, the Holy Spirit, and express what the Father is disposed to do and what He has *purposed* to do.

The value of our prayers comes principally from this ; that the Spirit has allied Himself with us, unites His power with our weakness, His prayers with our prayers, His cause with our

cause, so that we become one with Him. Thus, by a mysterious communion, the worth of His prayers becomes the worth of our prayers, the wisdom of His enlightens the ignorance of ours, and the wealth of His enriches the poverty of ours. So that when we pray it is not so much *we* who pray. *O, for faith in the Holy Spirit's helpfulness in prayer!*

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities—the general weakness of our spiritual life, arising, partly from the dimness of our spiritual vision in this veiled state in which we “walk by faith and not by sight,” as it were blind-folded, and partly, from the admixture of thoughts and feelings which spring from objects of sense and present interests; and again, partly from the inability to express in human language the subtle feelings of the heart. (1.) The Spirit helps the infirmity of our *ignorance*. “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” He helps our ignorance of God’s will. When we cannot learn, from the promises, prophecies, or providence of God, what is His pleasure, as to His willingness, or unwillingness, to bestow a desired favor, the Spirit will teach us, if in all sincerity, earnestness and faith, we breathe the prayer: “Lord *help* me.” (2.) He helps the infirmity of our *ignorance* of the true and comprehensive meaning of the promises. A penitent sinner resolved that he would not give up seeking God until he found Him. Time after time he prayed, but the heavens seemed brass above him. His soul was dark and he cried out: “I have grieved the Spirit of God away, and there is no promise of God for me.



Yet, again he prayed, when the Spirit flashed this promise upon his mind: "Ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." His heart was inspired with hope, and in a few minutes, by faith in the promise, he experienced pardon. (3.) He helps the infirmity of our *indifference*, as to our own personal duty, privilege and responsibility, and our insensibility as to the infinite value and peril of an unsaved soul. (4.) He helps the infirmity of our *faith-faculty*. Inability to believe God unto salvation is man's greatest infirmity. (5.) The Spirit helps the petitioner to get into such a state that God can consistently answer his prayer.

In the prayers and supplications thus offered, the Spirit makes intercession with God for us. He makes effectual intercession in the prayers of His people. The prayers of believers offered under the immediate influence of the Spirit, are the expressions of His own will—the utterances which He Himself has inspired. They have His authority and sanction, and when the will of the Spirit and the will of man thus join, in prayer, prayer must prevail with God, for the prayer is according to God's own will.

As certain as God is, and His word is true, the prayers offered to Him under the inspiration of His Spirit will be answered, if continued. He cannot deny His Son; He cannot deny His Spirit, because He cannot deny Himself, and therefore, He cannot deny His people's prayers, for His people's prayers are also the prayers of His own Spirit.

We should always, before presenting our peti-

tion for the favor desired, mentally, or both mentally and vocally, ask in faith that the Spirit so help our infirmities that we may pray "*in* the Holy Ghost," for *what* we ought and *as* we ought. One of the most important truths for the Church to learn, regarding this matter of prayer, is, that *only* as we are helped by the Spirit will we pray for what we ought and as we ought. Sometimes we pray for others when we ought to pray for *ourselves*. Sometimes the Spirit will lead us to pray for a certain *person*, sometimes for humility, love, power, or for His blessing on His Word. Sometimes He will beget within us the spirit of supplication; again, the spirit of intercession for sinners. No prayer can ever have power with God unless it is caught up into the *all* prevailing intercessional current of the Spirit, and thus borne to the ear of the Father. The intercessional current of the Spirit rises through fully surrendered hearts only; hence, there are multitudes of professed Christians who pray every day, not one of whose prayers ever reach the ear of God, *because* not one of those prayers is dictated by the Spirit; not dictated by the Spirit because the suppliants have grieved and quenched Him from their hearts, by daily sinning. God hears and answers that prayer only, that is indited by His Spirit, and contains His Spirit's prayer. It is for us, as we present ourselves at the throne of grace, not to dictate to God what we want, regardless of the mind and help of the Spirit, but to take our places lowest, sitting at the feet of the Great Teacher, and acknowledging with Abraham that we are dust and ashes, ignorant, blind and help-

less, and breathe our souls' sincere desire for Divine help. Then the Spirit will condescend to come and breathe His own holy prayer into our hearts, and by His help, enable us to make His prayer our prayer, and thus, our prayer becomes prevailing. We are to be careful, not to follow our *own* desires in prayer, but those *begotten* in us, nor rely on our *own* judgment, aside from the help of the Spirit. If we will do this we will always pray agreeably to God's will. If we would not resist, grieve, or quench the Spirit, He would be a constant fire of devotion within us.

#### THE PERVADING HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit pervades the entire being of the obedient, as the sunlight pervades the atmosphere, to enlighten the understanding, clarify the reason, quicken the conscience, create a sense of need, beget holy desires, strengthen the will, prompt to pray, energize the faith-faculty, and help to believe unto salvation.

There are what may be termed the ordinary, and the extraordinary promptings of the Spirit in prayer. By the first we are to understand the constant excitement of every Christian to breathe his soul-longings into the ear of his Father in heaven. There are circumstances under which the Spirit will mightily move and help us to pray for a revival, or for a certain person to be converted, or something else, when a holy impulse comes upon the believer and carries him with cyclonic impetuosity and power God-ward, and almost all he needs to do, seemingly, is to keep in the current of power, and soon, unless the Spirit is quenched, a signal victory of faith results.

This is an extraordinary excitement of the spirit of prayer within us. This may come to some Christians, but once in a lifetime. Some never have this experience, because they do not live in the altitude where these spiritual cyclones sweep upward to the throne. Others frequently have this experience; evangelists, or those who are *always* pressing after "all the fulness of God," and the salvation of the lost. When they strike the soul, we should never fail to improve the opportunity to prevail for what the Holy Spirit helps to pray. As we value the deathless souls of men we should be careful not to grieve, or quench the Holy Spirit of prayer, either under ordinary, or extraordinary impulses.

THE MEASURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HELP IN PRAYER.

We may prevail with God for *personal* blessings by the Spirit's help, as far as it is God's will that we should receive them. It is God's will, nay, His command, that we "Be filled with the Spirit." That we may "be filled with all the fulness of God." Brethren, is this *possible*—God's will—God's command? And shall we continue to live at this poor dying rate while the very atmosphere about us is instinctive—surcharged with Divine life and power? By the help of the Holy Spirit we may prevail with God *for sinners*, as far as the Holy Spirit is able to prevail with sinners *for God*. In other words, the Holy Spirit can enable us to prevail with God in the behalf of sinners as far as He Himself is able to prevail with sinners. This explains such statements in God's Word, as: "All things are possible to him that believeth;" and: "If ye have faith as

a grain of mustard seed \* \* nothing shall be impossible to you." Why? Because the Almighty Spirit helpeth our infirmities and, *to the extent of His power*, our infirmities may be helped. Hence, while "All things are possible with God," it is *equally* true, that "All things are possible to him that believeth:" *i. e.*, while *all* things are possible with God the Father, *equally*, *all things* are possible to faith, *energized* by the *Almighty* Spirit of God. When Jesus says: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, *nothing* shall be impossible to you. He is simply saying, nothing is impossible to the *Holy Spirit*, who helpeth our infirmities; for it is *His* almighty prayer, *within our prayer*, that makes our prayer *prevailing*. Hence, we may prevail to the extent of the *ability* of the Spirit to *help* our faith. Also, let us not forget, that one may prevail for anything for which the Holy Spirit helps us to pray, because, *all* the energy of the Holy Ghost is pledged to the *utmost* to help our infirmities, and *therefore*, we may become, as nearly *almighty* in prayer, *as the Holy Spirit can help us to become!*

#### A DAUGHTER PREVAILS FOR HER FATHER.

Illustrations are very helpful to us in understanding the *extent* of the Spirit's help in prayer. A few may be given with profit at this stage of my remarks. The following is a very clear, and forcible illustration of what I have been saying, related to the Rev. W. W. Patton, by a widow (of a clergyman) whose father was not a Christian and was sixty years of age when the event occurred, to which reference is made. She desired, one evening, to attend the monthly con-

cert for prayer, but on account of her small child could not. She resolved to spend what time she could, praying for the conversion of the world. Said she: "As soon as I entered my room, my father came before my mind, and I lost all sight of the rest of the world. With groans and tears I agonized on his behalf, till at length, I cast him over upon Christ, and felt a perfect peace. The next day I thought I would continue my effort, and I tried to pray again for my father, but to my great surprise, I had nothing to say. I could not frame a prayer. A rebuke came over me, which greatly humbled me, that I should be teasing the Lord, after He had already answered my request. From this time I began looking for a letter, announcing the conversion of my father. A letter came, and, in my haste, I concluded not to read the introduction, but to look about the middle of the first page, where they would speak of father's conversion; and there it was, precisely as it lay in my mind! After communicating with my friends, I found he had submitted the same evening upon which I had prayed for him."

"GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED."

When Mr. Finney was conducting revival services in Rochester, New York, the Rev. Mr. Clary prayed nearly all the time, day and night, so greatly was he burdened, by the Spirit, for sinners. Sometimes he could not stand on his knees, but lay prone on the floor, and groaned, and prayed in a manner that was astonishing. Mr. Finney said to a friend: "I understand it; it will come out all right, he will prevail." Then followed the most remarkable revival. Dr. Lyman

Beecher said of it, "That was the greatest work of God, and the greatest revival of religion, that the world has ever seen, in so short a time. One hundred thousand," said he, "were reported as having connected themselves with the Churches, as the results of that great revival. This is unparalleled in the history of the Church and the progress of religion." This, he spoke of having been done in *one* year, and, that in "*no* year during the Christian era, had we any account of so great a revival of religion."

WHY WAS NOT PRAYER FOR GARFIELD ANSWERED ?

Was the great desire, that went up in prayer from the hearts of millions that President Garfield might live, begotten by the Holy Spirit? If it *was*, the prayer of faith *might* have been offered for his recovery, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit never prompts to pray for anything that God will not grant. If it *was*, then Garfield died because of a *want* of faith on the part of Christians, for his recovery. If this desire was *not* begotten by the Spirit of God then the prayer of faith could not have been offered for his recovery, inasmuch as the prayer of faith *cannot* be offered without the Holy Spirit's help, and hence, there was no hope for his recovery through *prayer*.

PRAYER FOR OPPOSITES.

The Holy Spirit will not help each of two parties, praying for opposites, to offer the prayer of faith. To illustrate: He did not, during the war over slavery, assist both the North and South to offer the prayer of faith, the one for the *overthrow* of slavery and the other for its

*maintenance*. Nor, say in praying for a revival, if in the Church there are factions opposed to each other, will He help each to offer the prayer of faith. If one has the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit will help *that* faction. If *neither* has the Spirit of Christ the Holy Spirit will help neither. If there is a difference, as to means or methods, the Holy Spirit will help that party to prevail that follows the teachings of the Word, and is led by the Spirit.

#### LIVING AND PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT.

*Living* in the Spirit fits us for *praying* in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit cannot rise higher than the life and walk in the Spirit.

#### GIVE GLORY TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Christians are in great danger of not honoring and glorifying the Spirit, in this matter of prayer, as they ought, by taking to themselves the glory, or by receiving the glory from others. By the help of the Spirit they offer prevailing prayer and think of *their* having done so without giving due credit to the Spirit. We prevail, *only*, as the Spirit helps us; in other words, it is by His power that we prevail. Why then take the glory to ourselves, or give it to another? Without His help we could not offer one desire acceptably to God. Glory to the Holy Ghost.

#### HOW TO GET THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

Suppose I have not just now the spirit of supplication for myself, or the spirit of intercession for others, how am I to get it? If your will is completely, surrendered to God, having a desire for any needed and promised blessing, for yourself, or another, meekly, but firmly resolve, that



in the name of Christ, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, and for God's glory, you will have the answer. Then persistently and fervently put God to the fulfillment of His promise, until He answers you. Thus, the spirit of prayer will invariably be given you, for you have God's Word for any *needed* blessing. "And if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit (Spirit of supplication and intercession) to them (of His children) that (in faith) ask it." We are not always to *wait* for the spirit of supplication and intercession to create unutterable desire, but, knowing from the Word, from past experience, from the history of the Church, the character of God, our duty, and great privilege in Christ, we may ask of the Father, in the name of Christ, that He will give us the Holy Spirit to so help our infirmities, if need be, with groanings which cannot be uttered, that we may offer the prayer of faith for the desired object.

God's people might always gain the victory of faith for anything agreeable to God's will, if they but understood that, by the help of the Spirit they might always triumph, as Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:14): "Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ. My purpose is to inspire your courage. What is necessary to realize the answer to our prayer, is that we *continue* to express the desire begotten in us, by the Spirit, with a continually greater urgency and fervency, and thus exercise a constantly increasing faith, and

the answer will as certainly be given as that there is a God to give.

If the Holy Spirit will help us to prevail for purity, or power, or the salvation of sinners and we do not prevail, how can we expect to stand guiltless in the day of judgment? If you want purity, that is just what God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit want you to have, and the Spirit is here on purpose to help you to believe.

Sin in the Church is a non-conductor of the power of the Spirit. The Church is a free and *co-operating* medium through which the Spirit operates, in His redemptive work, in saving the lost. If Christians are living in sin, either sin of commission or omission, the Spirit will not use them in saving souls. A breath of opposition in the *heart*, to the will of God will grieve and quench the Spirit, so that He will neither help us to pray nor use us to His glory. Sin is infinitely grievous to the *Holy* Spirit, and, if *persisted* in, will invariably quench Him. If we refuse to do any duty, if we speak a single hateful word, if we indulge a hateful feeling, we will grieve and quench the Spirit, and He will not help us to offer the prayer of faith. The indulgence of any *questionable* practice is *sin*, and will grieve and quench the Spirit. "For whatsoever is not of faith (anything that we do not *fully believe* is right in the sight of God) is sin."

We may prevail for any blessing, or result for which the Spirit helps to pray. The Spirit will help us to pray for anything agreeable to the will of God. It is the will of God that all should come

to repentance. Therefore, the prayer of faith may be offered for the salvation of any savable sinner. Some of you may question the correctness of the above statement. My answer to your question is: Any person for whom the prayer of faith *cannot* be offered is eternally lost, and hence it is *not* according to God's will that he should be saved. If the prayer of faith may be offered for the salvation of any *savable* sinner in the community, how great is the responsibility of Christians! Brethren, until by the help of the Spirit we shall have exercised all possible faith in behalf of the lost, let us not say; "I have no more responsibility, or my hands are clear of the blood of all men." The Lord open our eyes, quicken our consciences and give us grace to meet our responsibilities. Holy Spirit use us as Thy agents in prayer!

"Come, Holy Ghost our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire;  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart;  
Thy blessed unction from above,  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love."

## LECTURE XXIII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND THE WORD; OR, THE TRANSMUTATION OF THE WORD INTO THE EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER OF THE BELIEVER.*

In all Christian living and labor, God's Word shall be kept to the front. Yet, the Word, unless impregnated with the omnipotence of faith, is a *dead letter*.

WHERE THE PATH OF PRAYER LEADS.

The path of prayer leads deeper into the secrets and inexhaustible wealth of the Word, than any other. In the study of the Word, prevailing prayer (by filling the believer with the Spirit of light) brings light to understand it, a power to transmute it into the experience, life and character of him who prays, and a power to make it effectual in the salvation of those who hear it taught. How often the otherwise illiterate, to whom God reveals His secrets, understand the deep things of God, while many a scholastic D. D. has not gone skin-deep into the *spiritual* life and power of the Word. Of course the Holy Spirit *only*, can be the agent (either directly, or in the believer) by whom Christ's words are made unto us "*spirit*," and "*life*." But the Holy Spirit as such agent, operates *only* in answer to prayer—the prayer of *faith*. Hence, Paul writing to Timothy declares (2 Tim. 3: 15-17.): "And thou from a child hast known the holy Scriptures

which are able to make thee *wise* unto salvation (wise unto the attainment of salvation) through *faith* which is in Christ Jesus." Here Paul *distinctly* teaches that the holy Scriptures are capable of making us *wise* unto salvation through *faith*, as a *condition*. In John (6:63) Christ teaches: "It is the *Spirit* (given in answer to *prayer*) that quickeneth "(the impregnating Spirit in His Word by whom the dead soul rises into faith and life) the flesh (sensuality) profiteth nothing (cannot impart Divine life to the soul); the words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, (imbued by the power of the Spirit of God in Christ) and they are *life*"—imparting Divine life to the soul, on condition of faith.

"LIVING EPISTLES."

As we become filled with the Spirit and devoutly study the Word, we become incarnated, living, breathing, walking and talking bibles. The Word is not only written, by the Holy Spirit, on the tablet of a living soul, but it permeates, feeds, strengthens, and is a blaze of light in the believer, and the two-edged "sword of the Spirit." Such Christians are "*living* epistles, known and read of all men." Ungodly men, seeing and associating with these incarnate bibles are *compelled* to read them. The statements of God's Word thus translated into holy living and sweet tempers, palpitating with a life and power Divine, compel the confession: "These men are the great power of God." In a revival in Chicago, under the lead of Rev. J. O. Peck, an infidel arose and came forward. Before kneeling at the altar he turned to the audience and said: "I have

been an unbeliever, but the consistent life and example of my wife have *compelled* me to see that she possesses something which I have not, and which has made her what she is. I *cannot* any longer *doubt* the reality of religion. I am determined to seek for it. Pray for me." The Holy Spirit working in the soul, "to will and to do of His good pleasure," in answer to prayer, had translated the Word into the life of the skeptic's wife, so that in all his daily association with her he was compelled to see and read the living, palpitating truth. The supreme want of the world to-day is the Bible *lived*! This is by the Holy Spirit filling the soul, in answer to prayer, and translating the Word of God into the life of the believer, in whom Christ's "words *abide*." Many cannot understand the Bible because it is "*spiritually discerned*," but its translation into a holy life is perfectly intelligible. Enoch and Elijah, Paul and Luther, Phoeby Palmer and Alfred Cookman, were *living* epistles that the child *could* read, and the skeptic *must* read, and, *could not misunderstand* or *misinterpret*. "Ye (Christians) are the *light* of the world." It is in the light of God's Word transmuted into the life, that reveals to the sinner his God and himself. "A city that is set on an hill *cannot* be hid." If it *cannot* be hid, then it *must* be seen. *Living* the truth, by Christians, is *knowledge* of the truth by *non-Christians*. "And *this* is the condemnation (the conviction of sinners) that *light* is come into the world"—the light of the *life* of the Son of God, and of his true *disciples*: for "the *life* was the *light* of men." Said Rev. J. O. Peck: "The

best defense of Christianity ; the ablest book ever published in Christian evidences ; the mightiest argument ever forged in support of evangelical religion, is a consecrated soul walking in the beauty of holiness (" in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless"). A holy life is the *one* unanswerable argument in support of the truth of Christianity. It is an *actual* demonstration of its *verity*. Infidels and skeptics may disbelieve the doctrines of the Scriptures, and deny the divinity of Christ, but, when a praying, godly man, *incarnates* those doctrines, and manifests in his daily life, that Jesus Christ has power on earth to forgive sins, and to transform the character and conduct, there can be no disbelief, nor doubt of that holy life. It is an incontestable *fact*.

TRUTH LIVED COMPELS RECOGNITION.

Brethren, you may not be able with silver tongue, to speak for Christ in pulpit or on platform. You may not be able to pour millions of wealth into the treasury of your Lord. You may not be able to go to the ends of the earth as ambassadors of the "King of kings," praying men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God ; but you can do a *greater* thing than *either*. You may live, before the eyes of your godless neighbors, a *pure life*—a life the embodiment,—the incarnation of *God's truth*, ablaze with the fires of holy love. When Lord Peterborough left the presence of the saintly Fenelon, the infidel declared : "If I stay here longer I shall become a Christian in *spite* of myself." Fenelon was the incarnation of Christ's truth, and Christ's life, by

unceasing "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," in *prayer*; and, could say with Paul: "I live, yet not *I* but *Christ liveth in me, etc.*" Again, J. O. Peck says: "Infidels are not so dangerous to the cause of Christ as baptized worldlings, masquerading in the name of religion," the power of a life filled to the brim, with the blazing truth of God is almost, if not quite, omnipotent. "The light of the body is the eye (the eye is the inlet of light); if, therefore, thine eye (intention) be single (be to glorify God, only) thy whole body (being) shall be full of light (of truth and holiness) but if thine eye be *evil* (your purpose to serve self in part, at least, and not God *only*) thy whole body shall be *full of darkness* (the darkness of error and sin). If, therefore, the light (fancied or professed) that is in thee, be *darkness* (the darkness begotten by unholy motives and selfish interests) how great is that darkness"—how blinding! as there is nothing so enlightening and convincing to the ungodly as the embodiment of the illuminating and powerful truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; so there is nothing so blinding and confounding to the ungodly, as Church members, who are the embodiment of the dark and destructive errors of Satan.

#### THE WORD AND PRAYER.

The relations of the Word and prayer are the most intimate. As the newly converted heathen put it: "I *pray*—I speak to my Father. I *read*—my Father speaks to me." Says A. Murray: "Prayer is not *monologue*, but *dialogue*. God's voice in response to mine, is its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of



the assurance that He will listen to me. 'Incline Thine ear and hear. Give ear unto me.' 'Harken to my voice.' *His* harkening will depend on ours. What we make God's *Word* to us, is the measure of what He makes *Himself* to us. His words abiding in us, is the equivalent of *Himself* abiding in us. What a view is here opened to us of the place the *words* of God, in Christ, are to have in our *spiritual* life, and especially in our *prayer*! In a man's *words*, he reveals himself. In his promises he gives *himself* away. He binds himself to the one who receives his promise. \* \* It is through our *words* that spirit holds fellowship with spirit—that the spirit of one man passes over and transfers itself into another. So, when God speaks for Himself, in His *words*, He does indeed give Himself—His love and His life, His will and His power, to those who receive these words (in a reality), passing comprehension. \* \* To offer a prayer—to give utterance to certain wishes, and to appeal to certain promises—is an easy thing, and can be learned of man by human wisdom. But to pray 'in the Spirit'—to speak words that reach and touch God; that affect and influence the powers of the unseen world; such praying, such speaking, depends entirely upon our hearing God's voice (in His Word). This hearing the voice of God is something more than the *thoughtful* study of the Word. There may be a study and knowledge of the Word in which there is but little *real* fellowship with the living God. But there is also a reading of the Word in the very *presence* of the Father, and under the lead-

ing of the Spirit, in which the Word comes to us in living power from God Himself. It is to us the very voice of the Father. A real, *personal* fellowship with Himself. It is the *living* and *powerful* voice of God that enters the *heart*, that brings blessing and strength, and awakens the response of a living faith, that reaches the heart of God again. \* \* The chief thing is, not to know *what* God has said we must do, but that God *Himself* says it to us. If I do what *God* says, God will do what I say. It is the Word of Christ, *loved, lived and abiding* in us, becoming, through obedience and action, part of our being, that makes us one with Christ, that fits us spiritually for touching—for taking hold of God. ‘All that is of the world passeth away. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.’ O, let us yield heart and life to the words of Christ; the words in which He ever gives *Himself*—the personal living Saviour, and His promise will be our rich experience. ‘If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.’ There can be only so much living faith as there is of the living Word dwelling in the soul. As God’s *words* are taken into our *hearts*; *our* words are taken into *His* heart. When Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from off the mercy seat. So may it ever be with us as we enter the holy temple for God’s worship and breathe our words into God’s ear.”

FAITH THE CONDITION OF DIVINE ILLUMINATION.

To the unsaved, the Bible is largely a book of

mysteries. One of the offices of the Holy Spirit is to unlock these mysteries, that concern us, in working out our salvation, and in helping others to work out their salvation. But He will not unlock these sacred mysteries to our eyes and hearts, unless we unlock to Him every chamber of our being. Then let our prayer of *faith* be: "Holy Spirit, unlock Thy truth, Thyself the key." "The natural (depressed and sin blinded) man knoweth not the things of the Spirit"—*in the Word*. The best commentary on the Word, especially in the matters of experience, is the Word itself, illumined by the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. In one hour as we come in direct contact with the Word, the Holy Spirit, in *us* and in the *Word*, can teach us more of "the mind of the Spirit," than all the commentaries in the world can teach us in a week. The Holy Spirit sinks the truth through the intellect into the *heart*, as He never does through the teachings of men, unless men are filled with the Holy Ghost. This is not decrying commentaries, or the teachings of men, but it is exalting the Holy Spirit above men, as the Teacher of teachers. The teachings of godly men are of incalculable value, especially as they formulate the teachings of the Word and present historic and scientific facts. Yet, one momentary flash of light, from the Holy Spirit will enable the devout soul to get such a view of, and *into*, the enriching depths of God's naked truth as all the teachings of men are unable to give! How strikingly the fact appears, that God reveals to us, His will in His Word, on the condition of *faith* in His Word. In His epistle to

the Ephesians (1:15-20) Paul says: "Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (the "Father of lights," by His Spirit. *Mark!*) may give unto you the spirit of *wisdom* (to quicken their inner powers, to *behold* and *realize* the verbal revelation) and revelation (a Divinely communicated spirit by which revelation is made) in the *knowledge* of *Him*. (the knowledge of God) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened (by the spirit of wisdom and revelation) that ye may know (by Divine enlightenment) what is the hope of your calling ("the hope of that to the enjoyment of which God calls you") and (that ye may know) what are the *riches* of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who (Mark!) *believe* (the prayer of faith is the condition of this illumination, revelation, and resplendent glory!) according to the working of His *mighty power*, ("beginning with Christ's resurrection and finishing with His glorious supremacy. No human machineries; nay, no catastrophes in geology; no forces in astronomy furnish to the eyes, Divinely enlightened so sublime and so glorious a display of the omnipotence of the 'Father of glory' as the work He hath 'wrought in Christ.' This work was in Christ, but for *us* who *believe*,") "which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead."

## THE SOUL GROWS BY FAITH IN THE WORD.

Those who prefer the teachings of uninspired men to the teachings of the Word by the Spirit, remain babes in Christ, in a knowledge of the Word. Mr. Muler says: "The first evening I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, I learned more in a *few hours*, than I had done during a period of several months previously. But the peculiar difference was, that I received *real* strength for my *soul* in so doing," as we *learn* and *love* to pray, we will *learn* and *love* the Word. Though the Holy Spirit is the Teacher of teachers, of the Word and delights and waits to teach us, yet," He will be inquired of respecting His mind in the Word. He may not respond at once, in every instance, to our entreaties, but, if we in patience, time after time, if need be, on our knees beseech Him to unlock the truth, He will do so as soon as He can trust us with the "pearl of great price"—the secret meaning of the Word. "For the meek (only) will He teach His way"—His truth. Our lives must be under the supremacy of the Word. This is how moral giants are made. It is God's truth thus incorporated—taken up into the very texture of the man, that gives *stalwartness* to the inner man. All the reformers are illustrations of this fact. This is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, whether by His *own* direct illumination and inculcation, or indirectly in the teachings of men under His control.

## AN ILLUSTRATION.

The Rev. S. A. Keen relates the following: "Once in my ministry, a lady came to me, who

was a very creditable worker in my Church, and a converted woman, and she said to me: 'I don't love to read the Bible. I haven't a relish for it. I find that I prefer to read the magazines, and the best authors and current papers. There must be something wrong. I know I ought to love the Bible.' I said, 'There is something wrong. You need that baptism of the Holy Spirit that will unseal the Book, and illuminate its pages so that your soul will exclaim,' 'How love I Thy law!' About two months after she came to me and said: 'O, the Bible is a changed book to me now! O, it's a *new* book, such a precious book! I only wish I had more hours in which to linger over its pages!' I asked what had transformed it so wonderfully to her. She replied: 'I went with it open before me, on my *knees* one day, and I said, give me Lord a heart to love and delight in Thy Word, and there came to me such a view of its truth, and such a sense of its Divine origin, that my heart was filled with a completeness of faith in it, and ever since it has been a glorious enjoyment to me!'" It was in answer to prayer that the Word was made such a blessing to her soul—that her understanding was so illuminated as that she saw its beauties and wealth as never before, and that the supernatural assurance of its Divinity was so profound, as not only to remove all doubt, but henceforth to make it impossible to doubt its claims.

THE DEVOUT BELIEVER A REFLECTOR.

"In the dark night," says Prof. Jaques, "I once saw a feeble lamp struggling to pierce the dense darkness, but the mighty genius of night

defied its impotent rays. Near by I saw another lamp, of the same general pattern, whose light streamed out dazzlingly into the distant darkness. I asked 'why does this lamp give more light than the other?—is the oil better?' 'No.' 'Is the burner better?' 'No.' 'But surely it generates more light?' Unexpectedly the answer was, 'No.' 'Why then does it emit a light so much more dazzling than the other?' This was the answer, 'Do you see behind that bright lamp the polished *reflector* which the *other* has not? That reflector gathers all the divergent rays and converges and flings them out in one glittering flood of light.'” So, my brethren, a holy life gathers and reflects, upon the eyes of others, the rays of Divine truth, and when the light steadily and constantly shines upon the eyes of sinners, it will pierce the darkness of the unholy heart and life, and *compel* recognition and surrender.

THE CHRISTIAN REFLECTOR AND THE SKEPTICAL  
ABSORBENT.

The following, by the Rev. S. A. Keen, is to the point: “There was a young man who had become infatuated with Ingersollism. He thought he had come to a full acceptance of its errors and had about concluded that the Church was nothing to be respected, the Bible a human invention, and religion a mere fancy. Just about this time he went to write at the same desk, in an office, where there stood opposite him, a devoted young man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. There they stood, facing each other, busily pushing their pens, for several months. Occasionally the young skeptic would flaunt out his reproaches

upon Christianity, and his infidel objections. His godly associate refrained from any sharp retorts and declined all controversy, but kept his heart so full of faith that he wore a bright face, breathed a good spirit, and maintained an irreproachable life. One evening the young skeptic fell in with the pastor of the Church to which his religious business companion belonged. As they walked together the disciple of Ingersoll said: 'I have made up my mind to join your Church.' The pastor, much surprised, said: 'I am glad of it. Come next Sabbath and I will receive you. And now tell me what has changed your mind.' 'O,' said he, 'I have been writing at a desk with a young man, a member of your Church. He never gets out of humor. He always seems so happy, and he is so kind, that he has turned all my infidelity out of me, and I want just what he has, and I believe he has religion.' The next Sabbath he joined the Church and is now a happy and useful Christian." That young man *believed* the Word, and as he *believed* it, its light and truths filled him, and shone through him, and fell on the eyes of the skeptic and *compelled* him to see (1.) the hollowness of skepticism, (2.) the satisfying reality of the Christian religion.

In reading and studying the Word of God, in which He *speaks* to us, we should be just as reverent and devout as when in prayer we *speak* to Him.

"The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord;  
In every star Thy wisdom shines;  
But when our eyes behold Thy Word,  
We read Thy name in fairer lines,"



## LECTURE XXIV.

*PREVAILING PRAYER AND THE WORD; OR, PREVAIL-  
ING PRAYER MOVES GOD TO EMPOWER  
HIS TRUTH TO MOVE MEN.*

### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

"It is not *ye* that speak but the *Holy Ghost*."  
"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost  
(in answer to *prayer*), and began to speak \* \* \*  
as the *Spirit gave* them utterance." "We (minis-  
ters) will give ourselves *continually to prayer* and  
the *ministry* of the *Word*."

### CHRIST, OUR GREAT EXEMPLAR.

In discussing this subject, the Word of God must be the man of our counsel. That we may get at the root of this matter, we must go back of the teachings of the Church, to the teachings and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, our great and perfect exemplar. In doing this we shall see, I think, that, not *only* the Church must receive Divine qualification to teach the Word, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, in answer to prayer; but that Christ *Himself* was so qualified. That we may see how truly, in *this* matter, He subjected himself to the same limitations, enduement, and conditions, imposed on His disciples, I will make the statement, that His supernatural wisdom and power, to teach the Word, and work the works of Him that sent Him, were not *inherent* but *received*. Both Christ and His disciples declare this fact.

I pray you do not exclaim "heterodoxy!" but wait and see if I can prove my statement correct. I shall not discuss this subject for the sake of presenting a view that may differ, at least, in the main, from the views entertained and expressed of it by others; but solely for the purpose of encouraging the young disciple of Christ to persevere in his prayer efforts, by showing him that, in so doing, he is treading in the footprints of his Divine Lord and Master, who too, asked and received.

#### RADICALLY ORTHODOX.

Let me say at the outset, that while I am compelled to believe and teach what I have stated, yet, I claim to be radically orthodox, as to the divinity of the Lord Jesus. He indeed was "*God* manifest in the flesh." "Emanuel; God with us." "For it pleased the Father that in Him (Christ) should all fulness dwell." "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily."

#### WHAT THE PROPHET SAYS.

Let us now see what the prophet Isaiah has to say on this subject. (42:1.) "Behold my servant (Christ) whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon Him. (What for? What follows?) He shall bring forth judgment (the gospel dispensation founded on justice) to the Gentiles." Again, (Isa. 11:1-3) "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots, and the *Spirit of the Lord* (*Jehovah*) shall rest upon Him (how is this spirit distinguished?): the spirit of *wisdom* (to teach

Him) and *understanding* (the fruit of wisdom): the spirit of *counsel* and *might* (to unerringly perceive perfect plans and empower Him to execute them) the Spirit of *knowledge* (of the deep things of God) and of the *fear* of the Lord (reverential, obedient fear) and shall *make Him of quick understanding* in the fear of the Lord, (literally, quick-scented in the fear of Jehovah) and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes (external appearances) neither reprove after the hearing of His ears," by the true merits of the case, and not by hearsay.

#### WAS THE PROPHECY FULFILLED ?

Now, let us turn to the New Testament Scriptures and see if this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. Said Peter, in Acts (2:22): "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs (*supernatural* acts), which God (the *Father*) did *by Him*"—Christ, as His Father's ministering servant. In Matthew (12:28) Christ Himself, said to His enemies: "But if I *cast out devils by the Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Then Christ did not cast out devils by His *inherent* power, but by a power *bestowed*. Again, in Acts (10:36, 38) we read: "The Word which God (the Father) sent (by Christ, His Son) unto the children of Israel, preaching peace, *by Jesus Christ* (He is Lord of all); that Word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God (the Father) *anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost*, and with power

(*dunamis* —the personal energy of the Father by the Holy Ghost. Not only was Christ's *authority* —*exousia*—from God, the Father, but His power —*dunamis*) who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for *God was with Him*"—in supernatural power. Paul, writing the Romans (1:4), says that Christ was: "Declared to be the Son of God with *power* according to the *Spirit* of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The Revised Version adds: "Even Jesus Christ, our Lord." Here the Lord Jesus is declared to be the Son of God by the *power of the Spirit* and not by His *own* power. So far as I know there is not a text in the Bible, that states that the power by which Christ wrought miracles was *inherent*, while it is repeatedly stated that it was by the power of God, by the Holy Ghost, that He cast out devils, etc.

#### HOW DID CHRIST GET THEM?

How did Christ get this wisdom, and this power, by which He had supernatural discernment, and performed acts of supernatural power? I answer, by the *prayer of faith*, just exactly as you, or I, may get them. In the life and ministry of Christ we may see how closely prayer and the Word are associated. He is not only our prayer pattern, but the model *teacher* of the Word. It was in answer to his prayer that the Holy Ghost came upon Him; filling and empowering Him, and, by whose helpful operations, "He spake as never man spake;" and by the power of the Spirit "cast out devils." By this baptism of the Spirit He was prepared for the work of His ministry. Luke says of Christ (3:21, 22-4:1,

14, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23): "It came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and *praying* (praying for what? For what he immediately received, as we shall see), the heaven was opened (true prayer and a perfect faith always open heaven) and the Holy Ghost descended as a dove upon Him." Matthew says: "And *abode* upon Him." "And John bare record (John 1:12), saying: 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it *abode* upon Him.'" "And Jesus being *full* of the Holy Ghost \* \* was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." How absolutely He surrendered Himself to the will of the Father as dictated by the Spirit! *All* who are "*filled* with the Holy Ghost," are "*led* by the Spirit." Did Christ *need* this *anointing* with the *Holy Ghost and power*? If he did not, he would not have prayed for and received it.

WHAT USE DID CHRIST MAKE OF THIS ANOINTING?

After his baptism, "Jesus returned in the *power of the Spirit* (not in His *own* power, but that of the *Spirit*, which is as free to His disciples as to Himself) into Galilee \* \* and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And He came to Nazareth \* \* and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read, and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me* (to direct Him to the right message) because He hath *anointed* Me (for what? A specific anointing for a specific work) to preach the Gospel to the *poor*, to heal the broken hearted (so to-day, in Christ's stead, His minister pours

the balm of the Gospel into broken and bleeding hearts), to preach deliverance to the captives (O, joyful, blessed privilege!) and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised And all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth: for His word was with *power*." Why not with *power before*? He was filled with the Holy Ghost, in answer to prayer. What followed Christ's words of power? The devil in a man cried out: "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art the Holy One of God! And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst he came out of him, and hurt him not."

CHRIST'S PRAYER ANSWERED.

When Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus: "He whom Thou lovest is sick," He put up a prayer that had reference to the resurrection of Lazarus, perhaps to know the Father's will, or for power to raise Lazarus from the dead. At the grave, He lifted up His eyes and said: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me (heard and answered My prayer) and I knew that Thou *hearest* Me *always*," because He always obeyed and believed the Father. It is very evident that Jesus was *dependent* on the Father for *something*. In His prayer He asked for it, and received it.

OUR LORD PRE-EMINENTLY A PERSON OF PRAYER.

Of Him it is said: "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and *prayed*." On the mount

of transfiguration (Lu. 9:28, 29) as Christ *prayed*, the glory of God broke through the veil of His humanity. *Listen!* O, how wonderful! "He took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain (*what for?*) to *pray* (did *He need* to, pray?) and *as He prayed* (while in the *act* of prayer) the fashion of His countenance was altered. (Was this the only time that the fashion of His countenance was altered? May be, *many* times 'His countenance was altered,' when all *alone* with the Father, spending the night in prayer. How these face to face talks with God light up the face. How many, *many* times, I have seen the face of my sainted mother, when in prevailing prayer, or when witnessing for her Lord, shine with a seraphic lustre!) and His raiment was white and glistening." But, it was, not only while the Lord Jesus, on the mount, received into His person the focalized blaze of the Divine glory that He *prayed*; but in the garden, amid the darkness of the night, and the still intenser darkness of the night of sorrow that enshrouded and agonized His soul, that His breaking heart cried out: "Father if, etc." Yes, and on the cross, still He prayed: "Father, forgive them, etc.;" and with His expiring breath He cried: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Do you wonder that the words of Jesus were "*spirit*" and "*life?*"

#### IS THERE A PARALLEL?

Is there a parallel recorded in the Scriptures, in the history of the Church, to Christ's prayer for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, His word of power, and the marvelous results following?

"*Greater works* than these (that I do) shall *ye* do (My praying disciples, full of 'faith and power') because I go to My Father," to send the "Comforter that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth." Jesus was now qualified, not only by authority, but from experience, to say to His disciples: "*Ye* shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you (in answer to prayer), and ye shall be witnesses unto Me; both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." "But tarry ye (in prayer) \* \* until ye be endued with *power* from on high?"

LET US SEE WHAT THEY DID?

With such an example and such instruction before them, let us now see what use the disciples made of them. "Then (after their Master's ascension) returned they unto Jerusalem \* \* and when they were come in they went up into an upper room." "These *all* (not but half a dozen of the one hundred and twenty, but *all*) continued in prayer and supplication," that the Holy Ghost might come upon them and anoint them (1.) with *wisdom* to "understand the Scriptures; (2.) with *power*, that "the Gospel of Christ" — "the Word of Truth," might be "the *power* of God unto salvation."

THEN WHAT?

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were *all* (the same one hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15) with one accord (the continuation of the 'one accord' of 1:14) in one place (unity of *purpose*, unity of *spirit*, and unity of *location*), and suddenly there came a sound from



heaven, etc., \* \* and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (‘this was the great *fact* of the Pentecost : the great fact of the New Testament dispensation—the advent of the Spirit,’ ) and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Ah ! this is what is needed to-day in the pulpit, in the Sunday School, in the prayer service—*everywhere*, that the *Spirit* may shape our utterances in testimony of the Master ! Then what ?) Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them \* \* this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, etc.” Having heard the word of testimony “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” what effect did it have on the hearers ? “Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles : Men and brethren, what shall we do ? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, and *ye* (as ye see that we have) shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls \* \* and the Lord added to the Church *daily* such as should be saved \* \* and with *great power* (*dunamis*—Divine *energy*) gave the apostles witness (to the fact) of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all. \* \* And Stephen, full of faith and power did great wonders. \* \* And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”

How much power would there have been in the words of Jesus had He not first been anointed by the Holy Ghost, in answer to his prayer of faith? How much power would there have been in the words of His disciples, had they not, in imitation of and in compliance with the instruction of their Master, "tarried" (in prayer) until they were "endued with power from on high?"

#### RELATION OF PRAYER AND THE WORD.

Who cannot see at a glance the intimate, and inseparable relation existing between the *prayer of faith*, and the *Word*, understood and taught with *power*? Without the Spirit filling, leading and teaching us we shall not be able to testify according to "the mind of the Spirit." Just as likely as not we will say the wrong thing and thus hinder the work, or, should we say the right thing but in the *letter*, it would neither quicken dead souls nor feed the hungry. Christ said: "He (the Spirit) shall testify of *Me*." The testimony of the Holy Spirit of Christ is a testimony within our testimony; a Divine voice within our voice. The testimony of God and man united—*blended*. As elsewhere, I said: The vivifying and energizing soul of our faith, is the grace of faith, and that the power of faith—spiritual power received, is in proportion to the measure of the grace of faith imparted by the Spirit; that the intercession of the Spirit within us is the soul and power of our prayer; so, the testimony of the Spirit, within our testimony, is the soul and power of our testimony. The Holy Spirit will not witness except of Christ. He

will not witness of science, or philosophy, of speculative theories, or, of tons of trash palmed off on the people under the name of preaching. No wonder the whole ministry of some men, in the pulpit, is a failure, a powerless—an “*emasculated*” ministry. If we want the testimony of the Holy Spirit to be in our testimony, we must first, “be filled with the Spirit” Himself, and then testify of Christ to blackslidden Church members, and sinners outside of the Church. Not only the *power* of the Holy Spirit must be in the testimony but His *love*. Power *moves*; love wins and draws. The bibles the ungodly read are the *lives* of Christians, therefore, Christians should be walking and talking bibles. The Word should not only be memorized, but it should be a palpitating power in the *heart*. “Thy Word have I *hid* in my *heart*.”

The Word of God, *on fire*, should constitute the *warp* and *woof* of sermons and religious teachings. God said to Jonah. “Go, preach the preaching that I *bid* thee.” Again, to the prophet Ezekiel God said: “Son of man, eat this roll (devour, digest and incorporate it into thy spirit nature), and go, speak unto the house of Israel all *My* words that *I* shall speak unto thee, receive in thine *heart* (red-hot coals of truth *from* the heart will burn their way down through every obstruction *to* the heart) \* \* and go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them: Thus saith the Lord God.” Not “*I think*,” or “*believe*,” this or that, but, “Go,” with the authority of a “Thus saith the Lord God.”

“Every sermon should have the peculiar flavor, fragrance and color of the Divine *seed* truth, of which it should be the growth. The sermon is in the text, like the flower in the heart of the bud. All the preacher has to do is to develop it. ‘Every seed yields its fruit after its kind.’” The Holy Ghost will not use our ideas, but His own truth in us, inflamed by His own life and power. In the truth seed of the Bible there is a *whole* Gospel, a whole Christ, a whole salvation, a whole heaven, and a whole hell.

#### WHENCE THE SERMON ?

It was once asked one of Mr. Moody’s busy workers, who seemed to have so little time for sermonizing, and yet was always ready with a soul-stirring discourse : “Where, and how do you get your sermon ?” His prompt answer was : “I *pray* to God for my sermons.” He did not mean that he received his sermons from God without any effort on his part, except prayer. But on his *knees*, as he most devoutly searched the Scriptures, he prayed God to give him the message needed. Paul said to the Colossians (3:16):

Let the Word of *Christ* (not the word of our own invention, or the powerless word of man) *dwell* in you *richly* (O, to acquire all the possible wealth of the “Word of life.” It is this wealth of “spirit and life” of the Word that the hungry people need, who sit in the pews. It is what a poverty stricken and famishing world needs today ! in all wisdom ; skilfully adapting all means, plans and arguments to the end sought. In Thessalonians (1:5) Paul writes : “For our Gospel came not unto you in *word* only but also in power

and in much assurance"—faith. Shouted the Rev. John Smith: "Brethren, I preach in *faith*, etc.!"

#### GOD'S BURNING GLASSES.

Faith in the pulpit focalizes the burning rays of Divine truth, and forges them into thunderbolts of power that leap and hiss and shatter the defenses of, and slay the enemies of God. Ministers baptized with fire are "burning glasses so arranged as to bring the rays of religious truth to a focus and cause ignition. From age to age Providence intermittently holds out such glasses over the Church to kindle in it new flames of love and zeal. Every soul may become a burning glass in God's light. Every soul may be adjusted in such a manner that God will shine through him and light the fire of a new life. The glory of the flame belongs in every case to the sun, and not to the glass; and yet the glass is an instrumental cause of the flame. A slight failure of adjustment destroys the focal igniting power. This is the difficulty in so many lives and Churches and communities, who do not understand that the difference between half-heartedness and whole-heartedness may be that between death and life. If any soul is not a burning glass, the fault is his own, and not God's."

The minister who would reap abundant harvests from the pulpit, must sow earnestly and long on his knees, in secret.

No man has the right to use the language that Paul uses, except he be a man of much prayer and great faith. Said he (Phil. 2:16): "Holding forth the Word of *Life* (not of death,

as all mere men's words are), holding forth the Word of Life"—as a lamp.

#### THE SELECTION OF A SUBJECT.

In preparing to teach the Word, we should pray the Father, in the name of Christ, to give us His Holy Spirit to assist us in the selection of a subject, if it has not been selected for us already. Having ascertained the mind of the Spirit in the Word, and having framed our outline, we should pray and think, and think and pray, and the Spirit will help us to fill in with such thoughts as He, *Himself*, would present to the people.

I do not mean to say that the Holy Spirit, as He assists our infirmities, when preparing to teach the Word, will bring to our remembrance the words and thoughts of the *Word* only. He will often bring to our remembrance the words and thoughts of men, stored away in our minds, but, *mark!* when the *Spirit* brings them to remembrance (not simply our unaided memory recalling them), they are not the *powerless* words of men, as spoken of a few minutes ago, but the *empowered* words of men, because they come to our minds *through* the empowering mind of the *Spirit*. Either the words of God or the words of men, in the *letter*, are but *dry bones*. The Holy Spirit, filling and empowering us, can clothe them with flesh, and put life into them. And He will do this as we follow His lead, while we seek to know God's message to the people. These thoughts begotten in us, and dictated to the *heart* by the Holy Ghost, are the thoughts that

breathe and burn, *and that He uses in saving men.*

“CANNOT BUT.”

Being filled with the Holy Ghost, in answer to prayer, gives great boldness in teaching the Word, as seen in the words of Peter, and John also, who answered (the rulers of the Jews) and said unto them: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto *you*, more than unto *God* judge *ye* (fulness of faith, power, and the truth, are accompanied by the *fearlessness of God Himself!* A lesson here for cringing ministers). For we *cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” O, that all ambassadors of God might feel, and yield to the holy constraint of this “cannot but,” of the apostles. “The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” But, it requires wisdom and power to handle it discreetly and effectually. How many ministers can make Paul’s language their own, when he says (1 Cor. 2:4). “My speech and my preaching was not with *enticing* words of *man’s* wisdom (O, how many sermons are made up of enticing words of man’s wisdom), but in demonstration of the Spirit of power.” But, our preaching will be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, when we pray as Paul prayed, and study the Word as he studied it. O, this criminal trifling with deathless souls, by ministers of the Gospel, preaching sermons to please the ear, and fancy, while many of those, who listen to them, are going down to hell on the *run!* How many ministers would be utterly surprised to hear the

sinner ask, in the service: "*Sir!* what must I do to be saved?" Power to remove mountains increases, as faith strikes its roots deeply, and broadly, *into the soil of the Word of power*—the Word of Him whose almightiness backs His Word.

#### THE TWO MEANS IN PROPER PROPORTIONS.

The two means of grace, prayer and the Word, should be used in proper proportions, and may I not say in equal proportions? It is only as we *pray* and *study* ourselves *into* the Word, and the Word *into* us, that we can build symmetrical characters. If we pray much, and do not read the Word devoutly, we are likely to become fanatical, and be blown about by every wind of doctrine. And if we study the Word *much*, and pray but *little*, we are apt to be puffed up with a knowledge that goes no deeper than the intellect. Prayer quickens the intellect to perceive and store up the truth in the mind and heart. "Since I began to pray God's blessing on my studies," said Dr. Payson, "I have done more in *one week* than in the *whole year* before." Luther, when *most* pressed with work, said: "I have so much to do that I cannot get along without *three hours a day praying*." Said Sir Matthew Hale: "If I omit praying and reading God's Word in the morning, nothing goes well all day. A great part of my time is spent in getting my *heart in tune for prayer*." Said McCheyne: "It (prayer) is the link that connects earth and heaven."

#### PRAYER, AND PREPARATION TO TEACH.

If teachers of the Word would spend one-half



the time usually given in preparing to teach, or that they ought to spend in preparation, on their knees, they would teach with ten-fold greater power, and the results, for good, would be ten-fold greater than they are, in many instances. Doubtless Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost, was directly dictated by the Holy Ghost, then filling him. There is no teacher like the Holy Ghost. He is the best commentator on His own Word.

WE BORROW TOO MUCH.

The trouble with too many of us is, we borrow too many thoughts from sources outside of God's word; *i. e.*, those borrowed thoughts make up the *staple* thoughts of our sermons. All great soul-saving preachers have been, and are, men of "one book." Paul, Wesley, Luther, Smith, Bramwell, Moody, Spurgeon, etc. How the young convert understands many portions of the Bible now, that he has the Spirit dwelling in him—portions that were dark to him before. The thought is: the mind should do its work under the *immediate* illumination of the Holy Spirit. This is never done, except in those who have a faith in God for *immediate* results in soul-saving, when the Word is taught. Then the Word will be mixed with faith, in them that teach it, and in them that hear it. Paul says to the Hebrews (4:2): "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them, but, the Word preached did not profit *them*, not being mixed with *faith* in them that *heard* it." So, likewise, the Word taught will not profit, if it is not mixed with faith in them that *teach* it. The great object of life,

aside from working out our own salvation, is to save the lost. The Word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, is the instrument to be used in saving men. The Word becomes "quick and powerful," only, as it *possesses us*. The Spirit possesses us, only, as we put up believing prayer for this purpose. Likewise, the *Word* possesses us, as we put up believing prayer for this purpose, while we use all other helps within reach. *Mark, all other helps, not hindrances!*

#### A FATAL MISTAKE.

Most of the preaching of to-day aims not at producing immediate soul-saving results. Every sermon of the Father's in Methodism meant *present* conviction, conversion, and sanctification. They preached on vital and practical subjects as: "Seek ye thee Lord, etc." "Behold I stand at the door and knock, etc." "What shall it profit a man, etc." So much depends in preaching on the *aim*, and the *power* to reach that aim at *once*. If the preacher always aims at reaching *present* results, he will be practical in his presentation of the truth and will rely on God for power to make the truth effectual.

#### A POWERFUL MINISTRY.

"A ministry of power must be the fruit of a holy, peaceful, loving intimacy with the Lord. O, how much depends on the holiness of our life, the consistency of our character, the heavenliness of our walk and conversation! Our life cannot be one of harmless obscurity. We must either repel or attract—save or ruin souls! How loud, then, the call, how strong the motive, to spirituality of

soul and circumspectness of life. How solemn the warning against worldly mindedness and vanity, against levity and frivolity, against negligence, sloth, and formality.

“Of all men, a minister of Christ is especially called to walk with God. Everything depends on this: his own peace and joy, his own future reward at the coming of the Lord. This is the grand secret of ministerial success. One who walks with God reflects the light of His countenance upon a benighted world; and the closer he walks, the more of this light does he reflect. One who walks with God carries in his very air and countenance a sweet serenity and holy joy that diffuse tranquillity around. One who walks with God receives and imparts life wherever he goes; as it is written: ‘Out of him shall flow rivers of living water.’ He is not merely the world’s light, but the world’s fountain; dispersing the water of life on every side, and making the wilderness to blossom as the rose. His life is blessed, his example is blessed, his intercourse is blessed, his words are blessed, his ministry is blessed! Souls are saved, sinners are converted, and many are turned from their iniquity.”—*Bonar*.

DR. AKERS’ EXPERIENCE AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

Said he, “Immediately,” as he believed for it, “I was filled with such a sense of Christ’s fulness and grace as overpowered me, and unable to speak or stand, I sat down. I felt that the power working in me was able to raise all the dead from Adam to the last man that dies, and said to myself, This is the power of Christ’s resurrection.

"The congregation was affected at the same time in a similar manner, though not to the same extent. Believers wept and shouted for joy, while the impenitent trembled and fell to the floor crying for mercy. At last I got to my room and laid down, unable longer to sit up, overwhelmed with a sense of the infinity, grace, and glory of God. In some ineffable way there came to me a consciousness of the presence of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a view of the Holy Trinity as related to human redemption and my own need, which filled me with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"But mortal man could not long endure such visitations of the living God, and at length I asked Him to stay His hand and let me live to declare His glory. The vision gradually withdrew, and I settled into deep and abiding peace. My doubts and fears were all gone. My confidence in God my Saviour and Sanctifier was unbounded and unwavering. I was greatly strengthened in soul and body, and felt that my preaching was no longer beating the air, but was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Under my first sermon after this, forty persons were awakened, and most of them were soon converted; and under almost every sermon I preached for years, similar results appeared. Nearly a half century full of changes has passed since then, but the power of that baptism is with me still, and I trust will abide with me forever."

#### VICTORY OF FAITH FIRST.

The victory of faith, before or in the opening of the service, is often a condition of victory in

teaching the Word. The teacher should become *master* of his hearers, *on his knees*, before he attempts to present the truths of God's message to them. Victory in *secret* with the Father means victory in *public* with the people.

"Now let my soul, Eternal King,  
To Thee its grateful tribute bring;  
My knee with humble homage bow;  
My tongue perform its solemn vow.  
All nature sings Thy boundless love,  
In worlds below, and worlds above;  
But, in Thy blessed *Word*, I trace  
Diviner wonders of Thy grace.  
There, what delightful truths I read;  
There, I behold the Saviour bleed;  
His name salutes my listening ear,  
Revives my heart and checks my fear."



## LECTURE XXV.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER, AND ITS ANSWER; OR, HOW MAY I KNOW THAT MY PRAYER MAY BE ANSWERED.*

#### CLEAR DISTINCTIONS IMPORTANT.

A great many blunders are committed in much of the teaching on the subject of prayer, by a failure to make proper distinctions, and to give clear definitions. Some people seem to think that the blessing needed, and promised, will be given simply because God has promised, and because they believe His promises are true. Evidently this is a mistake. There must be the exercise of faith by prayer—earnest, soulful prayer. Again, some seem to think that because they have great desire, therefore they have great faith, which is a mistake. We may have almost unbounded desire, and yet have little, or no true faith. Great desire may be begotten by the great interest we feel in obtaining the favor desired, while we are actuated solely by a selfish motive. In such a case true faith cannot be exercised. Our great desire may be begotten in us by the operations of the Holy Spirit breathing into our hearts His own great desire, as He intercedes within us, and “helpeth our infirmities; with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Desire is one thing, and faith entirely another thing; though we cannot have great faith without great desire—desire begotten by the Holy Spirit.

Faith, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," is an assent to the truthfulness of God's testimony, and a purposeful and affectionate trust in it, and contains in it a Divine conviction, or persuasion, that our prayer is being heard, and that (when our faith shall have done its work for the blessing asked) the answer will be given and the favor bestowed. We should here distinguish between a little or weak faith and a perfect faith, for the desired object. An imperfect faith will not secure its object. When faith is so put to use as to secure the answer, God accepts our faith and grants our petition. While we *yet* have the spirit of prayer for a desired favor, our faith is imperfect or insufficient. The moment faith has done its work, the spirit of prayer for the object sought entirely ceases.

#### DISTINGUISH FAITH FROM THE ANSWER.

May not faith itself be often mistaken for the answer? I am sure it is often so. There is an element of assurance, both in faith, and in the answer to prayer. The conviction, or assurance, in both, is the same in *nature*, though the facts assured of, are different. The one, that we shall have, or are receiving the answer. The other is that we have received it. The first is yet future, or being received; the last is already received, and is the, "Yes, my child," of our Father who is in heaven. Competent faith and a complete answer are never co-existent, the latter instantly follows the former, and *displaces* it. "For what a man seeth (has in hand) why doth he yet hope for"—believe for?

## DISTINGUISH THE ANSWER FROM THE BLESSING.

But the most important distinction to be made, is that between the answer to prayer and the bestowment of the favor granted. Most Christians, it is to be feared, confound them. To illustrate the difference, a parent prevails in prayer for the conversion of his child, and God says: "Yes," as in thousands of instances. The parent *knows* that his child will be saved, yet, the child is not saved. The blessing may not be bestowed for days, or weeks, or months, or years, *after* the answer is given—after the petition is granted. As I shall endeavor to show, farther on, in all instances in which the bestowment of the favor depends on the action of no one, but God and the believing soul, if the blessing is spiritual, perfect faith is instantaneously followed by the bestowment of the favor believed for. In instances in which the bestowment of the blessing sought depends, more or less, on the action of some one, other than God, and the petitioner, it may, or may not, instantaneously follow the granting of the petition.

## HEARING AND ANSWERING PRAYER.

Right here I will call attention to the distinction that should be drawn between God's *hearing* and *answering* prayer. God may hear prayer with the purpose of answering it, days or years before the answer is given.

In the ninth chapter of Daniel we read: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with sackcloth and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, etc." After twenty one



days Gabriel came to Daniel and said unto him: "Fear not, Daniel, for from the *first* day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were *heard* and I am come for thy words (to answer thy prayer). But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days, but lo! Michael one of the chief princes came to help me, and I remained there with the Kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand, what shall befall thy people in the latter days." By this statement of God's Word, we understand that God's hearing and answering prayer, are entirely distinct acts, and that in this case, Daniel's prayer was heard twenty-one days before it was answered, and it was answered a great while before the answer was *realized*.

I think the following statement will make this clear. A gentleman, representing a worthy cause, came to a friend of mine and asked him if he would direct him to the monied men in his community. My friend gave him a letter of introduction to a certain gentleman. The gentleman said to the agent: "I will see you this evening." They met. The plea of the one was patiently and kindly heard, but not a word was said, as to whether his request would be answered. They parted. A few days after, the gentleman representing the benevolent cause, received a letter, with thirty thousand dollars in it. Entertaining the man's request was hearing prayer. The letter was the answer to his prayer, and the thirty thousand dollars were the blessing bestowed. In this case the answer and the blessing sought

came at the same moment, as is often the case (always when possible) when we believe God. But, suppose after hearing the petitioner's prayer, the gentleman had sent a letter, promising in thirty days to give thirty thousand dollars; you can see the distinction between hearing, answering and bestowing.

The several distinctions mentioned may be illustrated as follows: An affectionate mother says to her child: "My darling, when hungry, ask and ye shall receive." This is the promise. The child says: "Mamma, I'm hungry, please give me bread." This is prayer. The mother listens to the prayer with the disposition to grant it. This is hearing prayer. The child waits with unquestioning expectation. This is competent faith. The mother immediately says: "Yes, my child; you shall have it." The prayer is answered. The child waits with perfect trust, and the mother immediately, or shortly after, places the blessing in the hand of her trusting child. This is the bestowment of the blessing, for which the answer had been given. Sometimes the answer is given in the blessing bestowed.

How may I know my prayer will be answered? In other words how may I know that my prayer is agreeable to the will of God? For, any prayer agreeable to the will of God may be answered. "For this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us, and, if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John

5:14,15.) If we think God has a reason for withholding what we ask, we cannot pray in faith. There may be a feeling of submission to God's will, but faith is *impossible*; hence, the importance of first ascertaining if our prayer is agreeable to God's will. We may know whether our prayer is agreeable to God's will, or not, by the teachings of the Word, the proper use of our rational faculties, and the helpful operations of the Holy Spirit. If God has given a specific promise in the Word for the blessing desired, then we may know that our prayer may be answered. The promise: "Blessed are they that hunger, and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," is an assurance from God Himself, that we may ask and receive a fulness of righteousness. If we are relying on the Word *only*, and have not a specific promise, doubt will constantly arise, and the suggestion will come: "May be you are not warranted in asking for this blessing." But we are encouraged, in the Word, to look for blessings for which there may be no specific promise given. For example: "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Again: "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us, etc." Our chief motive should be to glorify God only, and the prayer of our heart—of our *heart*, should be: "Father, not my will, but Thine be done. If it is *best* that the desire of my heart be granted, Thy will be done. If it is best that it be withheld, Thy will be done."

Inasmuch as the Word does not furnish a

specific rule for every possible case, therefore general principles are to be studied, and applied, in the absence of definite instruction in the Word. This will call into exercise our rational powers. At this point, however, great caution should be exercised, lest we lean too much to our "own understanding." In many instances we may rationally infer, from the benevolent character of God, that He will give audience to us in prayer. This is illustrated most wonderfully in the prayer of Moses for his sinning brethren. When the idolatrous Israelites had made, and worshiped a golden calf, God said to Moses: "I have seen this people and behold it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation. \* \* And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people? \* \* Turn from Thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against Thy people. And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." Moses had nothing on which to rest his faith but the benevolent character of God. As Moses' motive was absolutely unselfish, he had a reason to expect an answer to his prayer.

When a specific promise, and a proper use of our rational faculties fail us, we are warranted in expecting that the Holy Spirit will come to our help, and supplement the Word, and our rational sources of knowledge, in His teaching us Christ's "all things," and leading us into Christ's "all truth." The Holy Spirit is not the author

of the Word, but the messenger conveying it, and the expositor explaining it. "He shall take of Mine," said Christ, "and shall show it unto you. He shall not speak of (Revised Version, from) Himself." He is the revealer, not of His own, but of Christ's." When the quickening and illuminating Spirit, and the "Word of life" abide in us, we may know God's will as to any particular, regarding which it is God's will we should know. "For if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given." (James 1:5.) "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. \* \* But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." If the Holy Spirit begets within us great desire, forcefully drawing our thought and our emotions—the whole man after it; nay, into itself, as the whirlpool mightily draws into its center of power, whatever comes within the radius of its whirl, we may safely conclude that our prayer may be heard and answered. *Mark!* I say "if the *Holy Spirit* excites great desire, etc." There may be begotten great desire; nay, the most *intense* desire, and yet, that desire be begotten, *not* by the Holy Spirit, but it may be the natural result of the great interest we may have in the favor desired—an interest that centers solely in selfishness—a desire that

fails to recognize in the matter, either the will, or the glory of God.

To illustrate: A Christian has a loved one sick, nigh unto death. Naturally and necessarily an intense desire is begotten, that the suffering one may recover, and prayer, most fervent, may be offered, entirely without the aid of the Holy Spirit, and without any reference to the will, or glory of God. Nay, it may be *contrary* to the will of God, to grant the request. If so, of course true faith cannot be exercised. In this erring state, there is great danger of being misled, by impressions, and impulses not of the Holy Spirit. "Then what are we to do?" (1.) The controlling motive must be to glorify God only. (2.) The whole matter must be submitted, *unconditionally*, to God's will. The spirit of every true prayer, says: "Father, give if best; if not best, withhold." So gentle and tender are the promptings of the Divine Spirit that the most spiritually minded must proceed with great caution, or they may fall into grievous mistakes and shameful sins. That believer is already in the abyss of fanaticism, who thinks he is so led of the Spirit that he can make no mistakes, and is unwilling to be instructed by his brethren, and those "over him in the Lord." The trouble often is, on the one hand, we lean too much to our own understanding; on the other hand we depend too much on impressions, whether from the Spirit of God, or not; and not enough upon the Word, the great depository of Divine truth. We may have the infallible leadings of the Holy Spirit when necessary; that is, when the Word,

our best judgment, and our counsellors fail us. But let no one claim Divine guidance who indulges wilfulness, selfishness, or ambitious schemes.

We are bound, *not* to follow any impression unless we *know* it is of God. Such a conviction as excludes *all* doubt, or possibility of doubt. Without such knowledge there is no obligation to follow it; nay, there is a *positive obligation not* to follow it, until it is made clear that it *is* or is *not*, of God. Our duty is to take the attitude of humble and willing servants, waiting the manifestation of God's will. Every *obligatory* conviction of the Holy Spirit carries with it, unmistakable proof of its source. Then we must wait for Divine enlightenment and leading, and, if we are at one with God, soon our thoughts and emotions will be drawn into the intercessional current of the Holy Spirit, and where He leads, we may safely follow.

Dr. Hamilton, of Scotland, says in his diary: "I could almost judge of the issue (possible result) of my prayer by the manner in which I was enabled to pray. When my soul was drawn out and enlarged in prayer; when pleas unexpectedly multiplied, during the exercise, and while, notwithstanding, great longings for the attainment of the object desired, there was a holy acquiescence in the Divine will." We must have a promise of the Word that is specific, or reasonable assurance from God's character, or the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that our desire is according to the will of God. Without either or all, our desire may not be granted.

Again, Dr. Hamilton says: "Frequently have

all my efforts to spread particular cases before the Lord, and to pour out my soul for certain objects, been so utterly abortive that if God had said to me by a voice from heaven: "Speak to me no more of this matter," I could not have more assuredly inferred that the object sought was not to be imparted."

HOW DO I KNOW THAT MY PRAYER MAY NOT BE  
ANSWERED ?

Mr. Finney became deeply interested in a gentleman who had been elected a member of the legislature at Albany, in the State of New York. He prayed for him daily, and urged him to become a Christian. His conviction was deep. One afternoon, several of his political friends had an interview with him. "On the evening of the same day," said Mr. Finney, "I attempted again to carry his case to God, as the urgency in my mind for his conversion had become very great. In my prayer I had drawn very near to God. I do not remember ever to have been in more intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, than at that time. Indeed His presence was so real that I was bathed in tears of love, joy, and gratitude, and, in this state of mind, I attempted to pray for this friend. But the moment I did so my mouth was shut. I found it impossible to pray a word for him. The Lord seemed to say to me, 'No; I will not hear.' An anguish seized upon me. I thought at first it was a temptation; but the door was *shut* in my face. It seemed as if the Lord said to me: 'Speak no more to me of that matter.'" The next morning, Mr. Finney found that this man



had committed himself to carry out certain matters, in the legislature, that were incompatible with Christianity, and determined that he would not become a Christian at that time. When he returned from Albany he was a confirmed Universalist, and died such. It was possible to have prevailed for his conversion *before* he committed himself deliberately to what he knew and confessed was sin, but having done this he quenched the Holy Spirit, and God gave him over to hardness of heart, and reprobacy of mind, that he might believe a lie, that he might be damned. When the Holy Spirit left him, no prayer could avail for him.

HOW MAY I KNOW THAT GOD DOES HEAR MY PRAYER  
IF OFFERED IN FAITH?

(1.) When we have a specific promise that God will give what we ask. God cannot go back on His Word and, therefore, I know He cannot lie. (2.) I may know that God hears my prayer, when I exercise the "Spirit of grace and supplication" given unto me by the Holy Spirit. (3.) I may know it by faith, for "faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, etc." There must be unwavering expectation. (By the way, you may measure your faith by the degree of your expectation). James says: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. There must be not only faith but *unwavering* faith. Such faith contains an element of Divine assurance that God hears our prayer.

HOW MAY I KNOW THAT MY PRAYER IS ABOUT TO BE  
ANSWERED ?

If there is begotten within you a great enlargement of soul, and great assurance—"the full assurance of faith," you may know that your prayer is about to be answered. God says: "I will pour upon the house of David, (that is upon the Church) and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication." There will be begotten in you a strong belief that the answer is for you—that it is for you in the very *near* future. There will spring up a joyful expectation, and assurance that you are upon the eve of receiving the answer. A Divine conviction will pervade the soul—your conscious nature, when you will be able to say with a joyful heart: "I know the answer is for me *this* moment!"

" Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,  
That calls me from a world of care,  
And bids me, at my Father's throne,  
Make all my wants and wishes known !  
In seasons of distress and grief,  
My soul has often found relief,  
And oft escaped the tempters' snare,  
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!"

## LECTURE XXVI.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER ; OR, HOW MAY I KNOW THAT MY PRAYER IS ANSWERED ?*

#### WE MAY KNOW.

That we may know that God answers our prayer when faith for the answer has done its work, is proven by the Scriptures and experience. John says (1 John, 5:14,15): "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we *have* (not will have) the petitions that we desired of Him." Two or three days, before Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, He offered the prayer of faith for resurrecting power, and, and when standing at the door of the open grave, he said: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I know that Thou heareth Me always."

These Scriptures, with many others, teach us, that we may know that our prayer is answered. We may have this knowledge at the time the blessing is bestowed, or days, or weeks, or months, or years, *before* it is bestowed. We have not the answer, completely, while we have yet the spirit of prayer for the desired result, because the Holy Spirit will not be in us, the Spirit of prayer, for anything for which the Father has already answered. After the answer is given, the Holy Spirit, instead of being in us the Spirit of prayer,

He will be in us the Spirit of praise. The minister's wife who greatly desired to attend, at the church, the concert of prayer for missions, but could not because she could not take her little ones with her, resolved to spend the evening at home in prayer. As she knelt in prayer she was greatly moved and helped, by the Holy Spirit, to pray for her aged, unconverted father 600 miles away. She wrestled and prevailed, when prayer was turned to praise. The next morning she endeavored to pray again, for her father's conversion, when to her surprise she had not a particle of the spirit of prayer for him. What could it mean? Then gradually came the conviction: "God answered your prayer last night, for your father's conversion." The assurance became clearer, then perfectly clear. It was just as clear the night before, but she did not recognize it as such. She had no question but that the next letter from home would bring the joyful news that her father was saved, and so it did.

THE ANSWER IS NOT GIVEN IN FULL WHILE WE YET  
HAVE FAITH FOR IT.

A perfect faith, and a complete answer, are never co-existent. Faith is the *antecedent*, of which the answer is the *consequent*. "Faith is the evidence of things *not* seen"—*not received*, but not the things themselves. Faith must continue to increase until the answer takes its place, and is *in hand*, and the things not seen are realized at once, either in the *answer* given or in *both* the answer and the actual bestowment of the blessing. Thus faith is exchanged for the *answer*, and the thing answered *for*. We have neither

the answer nor the blessing sought, while we yet have faith for it. When the answer sought is received, faith for it ceases. This is true in the very nature of things. When the truthful and affectionate mother says to her child, asking for bread: "Yes, my darling," the child no longer believes, but *knows*, and "what a man *seeth* (*knows*) why doth he yet *hope* (*believe*) for?"

FAITH TRANSMUTED INTO KNOWLEDGE.

In a certain place, where Mr. Finney was laboring, Christians became very much discouraged, and sinners very much enraged, at his way of putting things. In a word the community was greatly stirred. Mr. Finney and a Baptist deacon went into the grove together and spent the whole afternoon in prayer. Just at evening, the Lord gave them great enlargement and promise of victory. Both of them felt *assured* that they had prevailed with God, and that, that night the power of God would be revealed among the people. Mr. Finney says: "The Spirit of God came upon me, with such power (in preaching in the evening) that it was like opening a battery upon them. For more than an hour, and perhaps an hour and a half, the Word of God came through me, to them, in a manner I could see that it was carrying all before it. Conviction spread over the whole congregation. Many of them could not hold up their heads." He did not ask an expression. The congregation was dismissed. He found one woman in the arms of her friends. "There was a look of great anguish in her face. After lying in a speechless state for about sixteen hours, a new song was given

her." That night, Mr. Finney was sent for to visit many persons in awful distress of mind. A multitude rushed into the kingdom. After such praying comes such an answer, such preaching, such conviction, such inquiry, and such conversions. Do the answer, and the bestowment of the favor asked for, always immediately follow each other? In some instances the favor is bestowed immediately, when faith is perfect. In other cases it is not. I will endeavor to show when it may be expected immediately to follow and when it may not be so expected. In all cases in which the blessing sought is *spiritual*, and for the person *asking*, its bestowment immediately follows the giving of the answer. If the blessing sought is *material*, and sought by the petitioner for himself, the bestowment of it may or may not immediately follow the giving of the answer. The artist, Washington Allston, in great financial straits, locked himself in his studio, and gave himself to prayer for a loaf of bread for himself and wife. While thus engaged, the Marquis of Stafford rapped at the door, and inquired the price of "The Angel of Uriel." In a few moments the artist was handed two thousand dollars for his painting. The blessing sought was at once bestowed. A person well known to myself, had given his note for a considerable sum of money. About one week before the note was due he had not a dollar with which to pay it, nor did he know, or have any reason to believe, so far as his circumstances indicated, that he should be able to meet his obligation. He went to God in his strait, and asked for help, and received

the assurance that he should have the means to pay the debt. After this Divine assurance there was no solicitude about the debt, and to the gratification of himself, but surprise to others, about a week after the prayer was offered, much more than the needed sum was placed in his hand. In this case, though the blessing did not come with the answer, it came when needed. If the answer is given the petitioner for a favor to be bestowed on *another* than himself, say, for the conviction and conversion of a sinner, the bestowment of the favor asked may or may not immediately follow the giving of the answer. There have been thousands of instances in which effectual conviction has instantly seized the subjects of prayer when the answer was given, and in a few weeks, or months, were saved. No one well read in Church history, or who has had considerable experience in soul-saving, will question, for a minute, the above statement. I saw with my own eyes, on a camp-ground, while a preacher was delivering God's message to the people, a middle-aged man sitting in front of the preacher's stand, spring from his seat, clap his hand on the top of his head, and start on a keen jump, to leave the camp-ground, hallooing at the top of his voice. He ran but about three or four rods, when he wheeled around, as quick as thought, and came back to the spot from which he started, fell on his knees, and cried for mercy, and in a few moments was shouting happy. As I now think of the transaction, all was accomplished in about sixty seconds. In other cases the bestowment of the blessing believed and answered for,

is not realized till days, months, or years after the answer is given. A brother prayed for his sister's conversion, and two years before she was converted he received the answer that she would be saved. If the blessing asked for is material, and for another, than the petitioner, the favor may or may not, be immediately bestowed. Suppose, in praying for a revival, or in a revival, the petitioner asks that God will save sinners, and believes for it, as he may. He has the assurance—the answer that God will certainly save souls. Besides this, he may have the assurance that sinners will certainly be saved within a certain specified time. Within a week, or in the next service, or, if engaged in a service, that they will be saved in the present service. Hundreds of times I have had, before the service, or in the opening part of the service, or while preaching, as infallible assurance that sinners would be saved in that service, as that I ever had of my own conversion. An acquaintance of mine, when asked by her neighbor what she thought about her husband's conversion, replied, "I believe he will be saved, yes, I believe he will be saved this week," and so he was.

#### PRAYER AND PRAISE ALTERNATE.

Still, as distinguished from the foregoing statements, in the midst of a revival there seems to be constant intermingling, or alternating of the spirit of prayer and praise, the exercise of faith and the reception of the answer, and bestowment of the blessing sought. While the spirit of praise is in the hearts of believers, because sinners are saved, or are being saved, yet in the



same hearts is the spirit of prayer that other sinners may be saved. To illustrate: A Christian prays for a revival, or for the salvation of sinners, and his prayer is answered, and he knows that one or more sinners will be saved if he maintains the victory of his faith. Yet, after the first flush of victory he still prays for the salvation of sinners. This is explained as follows: The answer was for a revival, and that implies the quickening of believers and the conversion of one or more sinners. His petition contemplates that if the answer is maintained by perfect trust, and the faithful performance of other known duties, one or more sinners will be saved. But he did not prevail for all savable sinners in the community, hence, while he has the answer, that sinners will be saved, yet he has the spirit of prayer for those whose salvation the first answer did not cover. And thus, he and all believing souls engaged in the revival, will alternately, as long as it continues, have the spirit of prayer, of praise, the full assurance of faith, the answer, and also the fulfillment of the answer. But when the answer is for some particular person, the spirit of prayer for that person ceases, and a blessed, peaceful assurance fills the heart instead; and if this assurance is maintained by perfect trust, sooner or later, the sinner will be saved; for God's answer is equivalent to His giving; because He never answers but that He gives, sooner or later, if the conditions are fully met by the petitioner, on which the answer is given. He always answers

as soon as the circumstances in the case will allow.

GOD ANSWERS OFTEN ON IMPLIED CONDITIONS.

I said, He never answers but that He gives, sooner or later, if the conditions on which the answer is given are fully met by the petitioner; for God sometimes answers conditionally. For instance: A believer may receive an answer for a revival; the revival may not at once be actualized. The answer is given not only on the condition of a perfect faith for it, but on the implied condition that the believer maintains his perfect integrity toward God and man. Should he fail to maintain that integrity, and become a wicked man, or should unbelief get into his heart because the revival does not immediately come, as far as *his* faith has had to do with securing the answer, the revival would fail to be had. An example of the principle involved in the last statement is given in Samuel (23:9,13), on which Doctor Adam Clark remarks: "In this short history we find an ample proof that there is such a thing as contingency in human affairs, that is, God has poised many things between a possibility of being and not being, leaving it to the will of the creature to turn the scale. In the above answers of the Lord, the following conditions were evidently implied: If thou continue in Keilah, Saul will certainly come down, and if Saul come down the men of Keilah will deliver thee into his hands. Now, though the text positively asserts that Saul would come to Keilah, yet he did not come; and that the men of Keilah would deliver David unto him, yet David was not thus delivered, and

why? Because David left Keilah. But had he stayed, Saul would have come down and the men of Keilah would have betrayed David. We may observe from this that, however positive a declaration (answer) of God may appear, that refers to anything in which man is to be employed, the prediction (answer) is not intended to suspend or destroy free-agency, but always comprehends in it some *condition*." The remarks of Doctor Adam Clark are applicable only to instances in which the result promised does not immediately follow the giving of the answer.

HOW MAY I KNOW WHEN THE FAVOR GRANTED IS  
BESTOWED ?

This is, a very, very important question. Doubtless thousands have been deceived, or deceived themselves in regard to this matter. Is it possible for any properly instructed person to receive any grace, convicting, converting, sanctifying or empowering, and *not know* it? I have no hesitancy in answering with an emphatic *No*. I have known so many persons who had been deceived into believing that they were converted or entirely sanctified, as they had sought pardon or purity, who failed to receive the grace that these experiences imply. Hence they lived lives full of torturing uncertainty, or fell back into the old rut in which they had run before. These deplorable results follow such teaching as this: "Believe that God has saved you, whether you have the witness or not. You are to walk by faith, and when the Lord sees best He will give you the witness that you are saved," or sanctified, as the case may be. If the blessing

bestowed, either spiritual or material, is your *own*, you *cannot but know* that it is received. If it is material, your bodily senses make you conscious of its presence and possession. If spiritual, your moral senses will inform you of its presence and possession. To believe you *have* received is a contradiction and a delusion, and hence, as far as known, has no sanction from the Scriptures. The realization of the bestowment of a blessing always *immediately* follows its bestowment. If the blessing can be given when faith for it is perfect, and the answer is received, it is *always* so instantly given, and with, or in, the blessing so received, is always the *evidence* of its presence and possession. Let no one decieve you to the contrary. Pardon may be bestowed the moment faith for it is perfect, and invariably is so bestowed, and, accompanying its bestowment, instantly comes the witness of the Spirit to that fact. So, purity of heart may be consciously received the moment faith for it is complete, and invariably is so received. Every blessing of God, material or spiritual, has in it evidential attributes that prove to us, by our material or spiritual senses, its presence and possession. Can a man receive and be in possession of a thousand dollars and not know it? In the regenerated man are implanted all the graces of the Spirit, namely: "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, etc." Is it possible that a person be saved—pardoned and regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, and have implanted in his heart all the graces of the Spirit, and not know it? What is true of pardon is equally true of purity.

The Holy Spirit's work, and His testimony to that work, are always co-existent. The conviction is inherent in the work itself. Can a sick man be restored to perfect health and *not know it*? Perfect physical health carries in itself the evidence of its presence and possession. So, equally, perfect spiritual health (entire sanctification—holiness—wholeness) carries in itself the unmistakable evidence, to a properly informed person, of its presence and possession. Hence, it is an error—a delusion—to *believe* that a work *has been done*, not only because it involves a contradiction, but because any blessing makes us conscious of its presence and possession. If you have not the consciousness of the possession of pardon or purity, and yet believe that you have either or both, your faith is *spurious*. You may believe (not simply think so) that Jesus *saves you now*. You may say, by a genuine faith, on the authority of God's word, "I know that Jesus saves me now," but you cannot say, by a genuine faith, "I believe that Jesus *has* saved me," because faith and possession are never co-existent. The existence and possession of the one always, in the very nature of things, excludes the existence and possession of the other. When the blessing sought is received, faith for it ceases, and experimental knowledge, by the witness of the Spirit, and the possession of both the answer, and the blessing answered for, take the place of faith. The seeker of pardon has no right to conclude that he *has* received pardon until consciousness of the fact takes the place of faith. The seeker of holiness has no

right to conclude that he has received, both the answer and the blessing, until consciousness of the fact takes the place of faith. The petitioner who asks that God will save souls, has no right to infer that God will certainly save souls until the answer to his prayer takes the place of his faith.

But mark you, when faith, a faith that is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," is exercised in part, it is infallible evidence that you may obtain the object of your faith. This *degree* of faith is an evidence that God is waiting to answer in full. For we experience a genuine faith only by the help of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will not help us to exercise a partial, without helping us to exercise a complete faith, if we will use the grace given. If the answer is not given, it is an evidence of a weak faith "according to your faith (according to its degree) be it (done) unto you." Because your faith is not perfect do not conclude that you have none. Because God has not saved your friend, do not conclude that He is not hearing your prayer, or that He will not, if you have *received* the answer by faith. Hold on! Hold on! and God will not only answer your prayer, but will certainly save your friend. The strongest temptation to faint and give up is when you are upon the threshold of victory. Every support, other than God's word, utterly gives way, and your naked, all embracing, all appropriating, all victorious faith prevails with God, who with infinite love and with infinite pleasure, in a moment, says: "Be it unto thee, *even as thou*

*wilt ;*" and the blessing that He has been long waiting to bestow on His trusting child, fills the soul with indescribable sweetness. When the victory is won, your petition granted, and you know that your Father has heard and granted, the spirit of thanksgiving and exultation takes the place of the spirit of intercession, and the calmness and sweetness of God's own mind and heart fill and rule your minds and hearts!

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,  
May I thy consolation share,  
Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,  
I view my home, and take my flight;  
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise,  
To seize the everlasting prize;  
And shout while passing through the air,  
Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer."



## LECTURE XXVII.

*PREVAILING PRAYER—SECRET AND UNITED ; OR,  
SINGLE HANDED AND CONCERTED PRAYER.*

### SCRIPTURE STATEMENT.

“But thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Mat. 6:6).

### ALONE WITH GOD !

Christ is our teacher in prayer. He can best teach us when *alone* with Him. That we may be alone with Him we must have a secret *place* for meeting, instruction and communion. Not only should we have a secret *place* for meeting, but, we should meet Him, above all, in “the secret place of the Most High”—the *inner* sanctuary, where God and the soul can be absolutely *alone*. How shall I speak of such a meeting ?

*Alone with God !* Abraham, alone with God, fell on his face, saying : “I am but dust and ashes !” How reverent should we be in His presence ! A proper sense of His majesty produces a “sacred awe that dares not move !” His smile is heaven ! His frown is hell ! As Jacob, at Bethel, awaked out of his sleep, said : “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not ! And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place ! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven !” One act of



His almighty will may shiver the universe to atoms! To sin, as an infinitely hateful thing, He opposes His whole nature, in all its infinite energy, and will bring into judgment, not only public acts of crime, but "every *secret* thing." Alone with God! from whom nothing is hidden. Who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men. His *all* seeing eye is as a flame of fire, before one flash of which the heavens and the earth would flee away! How great His power, justice, wisdom and love! "But the greatest of these is *love*!" As we go into His "secret place" with broken, contrite and trusting hearts, how His sterner attributes are overshadowed by infinite and tenderest love. How the merciful, compassionate, and tender side of His nature, manifests itself! "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord *pitieth* them that *fear* Him." "He remembereth that we are dust." Alone with God! Shut *in* from the world. Shut *up* with God. Above anything else, we desire to be alone with the one we love most. If we love God with *all* our hearts, as He requires, then the secret place of meeting Him will be the dearest spot on earth, and the communion that of heaven itself. O, that *silent heaven of love*—ravishing *love*! that makes God and His trusting child *one*, as Jesus said: "I in My Father, and ye in me and I in you;" and as Jesus prayed: "That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." No eye can witness the meeting. No ear can hear the whispered word of penitence—of trust—of *love*. No hand can

break the fastenings that lock us in with the One dearest to our hearts! No embarrassment. No fear lest He note our stammering and broken accents. No listener but our *Father*. Contemplate this wonderful scene! This interview between the Infinite Father, and loving, trusting child, crying, "Abba, Father."

HONESTY IS MASTER OF THE SITUATION.

Without reserve, the heart is opened wide for Divine inspection, and its inmost secrets bared to His tender gaze. What revelations! Some of them delight our Father; others grieve Him at His heart.

SOME THINGS WE TELL TO GOD ONLY.

There are thoughts, confessions and troubles you can tell to no one but your truest, most loving and most sympathizing Friend. Sometimes your heart has been too full to contain itself. You hurriedly sought "the secret place of the Most High," and in your closet, having shut to the door, you climbed up into the arms of your Father, burying your face in your hands and yourself in His bosom of love and sympathy, you sobbed like a child in its grief, until your sorrow had expended itself, and your Father's loving caresses and comforting words had soothed and comforted your aching heart.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW?

If you want to learn how to pray, pass over Jabbok with Jacob, where, *alone* with the Angel all night, he wrestles and prevails. Go alone with Luther, when the realization of his tremendous responsibility bore down upon him like the weight of worlds, and, when he took on a

power that discomfited and paralyzed his legion foe. Go alone with, but unbeknown to, Finney, into the empty church, the barn, or the woods, where, hour after hour, will all the vehemence of his *intensely* intense nature, he does violence to heaven and takes the kingdom of heaven by storm.

#### WHAT FOLLOWS ?

“Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly;”—“ahundred-fold” in this life, in blessing and victory, and in the world to come, “everlasting life.” While here on earth, heaven comes down our souls to greet. Above, “the shining scribes are making up our credits, fling away titles to inheritances, piling up nuggets of gold in the heavenly treasury, polishing crowns of life, decorating with jewels, sceptres of power, preparing mansions in God’s house, and building flights of steps for our future ascension to sit with Christ in His throne, that we may reign for ever and ever.”

#### SWEETNESS OF SOLITARY FELLOWSHIP.

How few, comparatively, know much of “the secret place of the Most High,” where, *above* everything else, they love to meet with their beloved Friend and Lord. The language of a devoted Church, coming from a glowing heart is: “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, His head is as the most fine gold; His locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the

beryl. His mouth is most sweet. He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O! daughters of Jerusalem." How *blessed* the fellowship of supreme affection—an affection whose glow is as the fires of the furnace,—with Him who is "*chief* among ten thousand, and *altogether* lovely."

"Thou hidden Source of calm repose,  
Thou all sufficient love Divine,  
My help and refuge from my foes,  
Secure I am while Thou art mine:  
And lo! from sin and grief and shame,  
I hide me, Jesus, in Thy name."

#### UNITED PRAYER IS POWER INTENSIFIED.

Much of what I shall say on united prayer is applicable to prayer in the regular prayer service of the Church, or in revival effort. Our Lord has said (Mat. 18:19,20). "Again I say unto you, if two of you (purposely put down to the lowest *plural* number) shall *agree* on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered *together*, in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The design of *concerted* prayer is to bring Christians into more perfect accord and sympathy with each other, and that far greater results may be reached than can be by individual prayer, or for results that individual prayer may not be able to obtain at once. Given results may be reached much easier, and the greater the number united the easier the victory may be won. Human hearts are more greatly moved and human faith intensified by association in intercession. There is a holy rivalry. Each supports and helps the other.

This is a recognition by Christ of the social principle in intercession.

#### HINTS AS TO THE PRAYER SERVICE.

In the regular prayer service of the Church, about eight or ten minutes should be given to the introductory service of song and prayer. The songs should be selected beforehand, and with special reference to the topic to be presented, by the leader of the meeting. The first prayer should be made by some one who is so in fellowship—*communication* with God, that the Holy Spirit may so help his infirmities as that he shall know *what* to pray for *as* he ought, and thus give the keynote as to the object to be sought and the spirit, earnestness, and purpose with which that object is to be sought.

#### CAREFUL AND PRAYERFUL PREPARATION.

Ten or fifteen minutes may profitably be given to the reading of a *brief* Scripture lesson, and its exposition. *Thorough* preparation, by the leader, on his knees in prayer, and a study of the Word, should be made. With this preparation, of mind and heart, he may go to the prayer room and make it a veritable Bethel, and set all present ablaze. The leader who fails to make his preparation until within a few minutes before going into the prayer room, or waits for the first hymn to suggest a topic, will soon weary and disgust an intelligent people.

#### THERE MUST BE FRESHNESS.

The leader's words must come from his lips as if newly coined from the mint of heaven, and red-hot—fevered with the lightnings of holy fire. The words of comment should be brief, crisp,

pointed, apt, animated, aimed at *one* object, stirring, thrilling, and full of the sweetness and marrow of the Gospel, Definite aim, by the *leader*, may be made after a careful and prayerful consideration of the moral status, and needs of the Church and community.

#### VARIETY ESSENTIAL.

Variety is one of the spices of the prayer service—variety not only in topics but methods. The leader, whose methods have become stereotyped, has already lost his own spirituality, and will not help those who attend the service to retain theirs.

#### WHAT NEXT ?

After the twenty minutes given to the opening part of the service, and the Scripture lesson, the remainder of the time should be occupied by the brothers and sisters present, in such exercises as the leader may suggest. In this part of the service there should be a convergence of all that may be said and done upon the *one* object of the meeting.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST DIRECT.

I have said that some specified object should be prayed for. But little can be accomplished when prayers are indefinite and scattering. "But," you say: "We do not know *what* to pray for as we ought, at any specified time. Is it always in order to pray for the unsaved?" I answer: by no means. I do not suppose that a single prayer went up for sinners, during that ten-days prayer meeting that reached its object on the day of Pentecost. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead a Christian to prayer for himself only, and what

is true of the individual Christian is true of the community of Christians. The Holy Spirit always knows what we should pray for. One of His important offices is to direct prayer efforts to their proper objects. The leader of the meeting may be so in fellowship with God as, beforehand, to ascertain "the mind of the Spirit" as to *what* to pray for. If the leader is not thus in fellowship with God, some one else may be, and by leading in prayer, as the Spirit directs, when the opportunity is given, may give a proper direction to other prayers. At the *beginning* of every meeting the question should be raised, secretly or openly: What shall we pray for? If it is not known, the Holy Spirit will reveal it, if, in faith, He is asked to do so.

#### HOLD THEM TO PRESENT VICTORY.

An extremely important point is, that the leader of the service should so control those present as to prevail on them to hold on *unitedly*, not only until a blessing is obtained in part, but until the complete victory of faith is consciously obtained. The great difficulty lies in holding all present, to a *united* and constantly intenser effort, until the complete answer is reached. The effort to obtain an answer, by united prayer, is too often like tugging a heavily loaded wagon from the foot to the summit of a long hill, which becomes steeper as it ascends. Time after time the wagon is drawn up the hill, to a greater or less distance, and then let run back from whence it started. This operation is repeated, week after week, and year after year, and the load is never wheeled to the summit. So, too often, in united

prayer, just as the victory is at hand the effort ceases. Christians, generally, are so accustomed to asking without an *unyielding* purpose to have the answer at once, that the wagon is taken up the hill but a very short distance and then let go back again; or, if they had some purpose, in the beginning of the effort, it soon gives way.

Those present should unite by *agreement*. "If two of you *agree*, etc." If the needs are *special*, hold an informal consultation, and enter into a solemn compact, not to yield until the desired answer is received. It is through the most perfect union of Christians that the Spirit manifests His full power. The one hundred and twenty were "*all with one accord in one place*." Such unity implies: (1.) Oneness as to the object sought; (2.) Oneness in sincerity. "Let us draw near with *true* hearts;" (3.) Oneness in asking in Christ's name; (4.) Oneness in faith; (5.) Oneness in unconditional committment for victory—victory before the close of the service. If a society of Christians would once, or a few times, thus unitedly press the battle to victory; they would soon learn that they could have what they would.

Unity in prayer attracts the Lord Jesus Christ as the pole attracts the needle. "There am I in the midst." It is the *presence* of the living Christ "in the *midst*," in the ministry of the Holy Ghost, that gives united prayer its unexampled power. The presence of Christ and the answer to prayer are proof of the unity of prayer.

AN AFTER SERVICE.

Should a complete answer not be obtained



before the time to close the regular service, it is well, in a time of special interest, to request those who can do so, to remain for an *after* service: a service in which the effort for complete victory shall be continued until it is gained. Those who remain will be surely *united*. If it takes an hour, two, three, or five, what of that? Are not the interests at stake sufficiently great to warrant such an effort? If they are *not* then by all means do not waste time that ought to be spent, perhaps in sleep, or given to secular matters. If they *are*, then we should be sufficiently in earnest to deny ourselves and make the necessary effort. Shall we be tremendously in earnest, denying ourselves of rest and food to save a human life, and yet, let the souls of our neighbors, nay, it may be, of our own families, slip into perdition without even *one* honest, earnest, self-denying effort to rescue them?

Multitudes of instances are recorded of God's people unitedly protracting a prayer service far into the night, or through the night. I know of no instance that was not followed by a signal victory of faith, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When, during the reformation, the enemy menacingly threatened the entire overthrow of the great cause committed to Luther, he and his friends, time and again, most earnestly, during long continued seasons, wrestled with God until God answered and defeated the foe. When Wesley and his helpers in their work, were strenuously opposed, or inhumanly beaten and persecuted, they invariably had recourse to prayer, often protracted seasons, until they were enabled

to triumph over their opponents. It was after a whole night spent in united prayer, by a number of Christians, that Edwards was enabled to preach with such power that the congregation was lashed into a tempest of excitement—the people clinging to the pews and pillars of the church, fearing they would drop into hell, and sinners by the score and hundred, crying aloud for mercy. Such instances may be repeated to-day if God's people will meet the conditions—if they will be sufficiently in *earnest*.

SUPPLICATION MUST BE IN THE SPIRIT.

The spirit of prayer if not already in the hearts of those present, *must* be had by confessions of sins, and by asking for it in faith. The spirit of prayer is always in the heart of the believer, if the Holy Spirit has not been grieved and quenched and driven from the heart by sins of neglect, or open act.

THE TIME SHOULD BE ALL OCCUPIED.

But if it is not, let not the leader of the meeting, or others, allow the waste of precious time so as to disturb and annoy them that their impatience shall do the service more harm than the neglect of delinquents.

THE LEADER SHOULD LEAD.

In the conduct of the meeting the leader should not allow himself to be controlled by the formal, Christless and soul-chilling conventionalities of those who have no sympathy with an earnestness that would find expression in pouring out of the soul and voice to God (not simply the *voice*, as is so often the case), nay, a vehement wrestling—a *storming* the kingdom of

heaven ! To regulate or straight-jacket the true spirit of prayer is to straight-jacket the Holy Spirit Himself, for He is the Spirit of prayer in our hearts. The true spirit of prayer never leads to anything discourteous or vulgar.

The one leading in prayer should be so dominated by great desire—a desire that cannot be satisfied with anything short of the answer—so dominated, I say, as to be able to throw off all the restraint arising out of his surroundings. This is *very important*. To be hampered and controlled by such restraints is to *fail* to offer the prayer of faith !

In the beginning of your prayer do not, at once, rattle off words empty of the impulsive power of the spirit of prayer, but be considerate, and thoughtfully and trustfully expect the Holy Spirit to move and lead you in prayer ; and as He is given the right of way, and helps your infirmities, and leads toward the object for which He has created a desire in the heart, there may be a rapidity of thought and utterance. Do not try to *work up* an emotion or enthusiasm by noise and physical excitement, but, having surrendered unconditionally to God, *expect* the Holy Spirit to so mightily help to pray as that you shall be able to prevail.

#### BLOOD EARNESTNESS.

Do not be afraid of downright *blood* earnestness. One thing needed to-day, especially in some of our city Churches, is a *perpetual blaze of impetuous and holy enthusiasm !*

#### NOT AN ICICLE BUT A FIRE-BRAND.

Do not come to the service as cold as a Sibe-

rian icicle, expecting to warm by some one else's fire ; but, before coming, wait on the Lord until holy fire descends from heaven—fires as intense as the fires in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace—that shall glow in your heart, and burn away all unholy restraint.

Do not be an absorbent of the spirituality of others, but a *battery*, mightily surcharged from the throne. Then every word thrown off will be a bomb, tremulous with omnipotent spiritual dynamite.

Let not your *chief* aim be to tip the cup, to make it run over, but let your thirsty soul get so near to God—the fountain head, as to catch the flowing stream. Then when the heart is full it will overflow in spite of you.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE PRAYER SERVICE.

Above all other services the prayer service must be a success, or the Church itself and its work, must be a failure. The failure of this service is a matter of deep and constant solicitude to the earnest pastor who understands what an important factor it is in developing the saving power of a Church. Indeed, this service is not only the thermometer of the Church, but the service in which spiritual power is taken on and used to God's glory. That this service may be the greatest success possible, as far as practicable, each present should be made to *realize* that he or she is responsible, in his or her measure, for the success or failure of the service. Every Christian, not only in the prayer service, but everywhere, should be *fully* committed to do God's *whole* will. So far as the will is thus sur-

rendered, the Holy Spirit will assist to believe, and bear the cross, in vocal prayer or testimony. Also, the prayer service, or services, should be so arranged as to afford each member the privilege of taking an open part in the service. But how shall each of several hundred members of a city Church, in the ordinary weekly prayer service, have such a privilege? That would be practically impossible.

Naturally the very important questions arise: (1.) How, in a large Church, can the responsibility for the success or failure of the service, be so distributed as that each member shall so feel his responsibility as that he will do his utmost to make the meeting a success? (2.) How may a large per cent., or all, take part? (3.) How can they be persuaded to do so?

In every case in which it is impracticable for all to take part in the service, divide the membership into sections or bands, say, twenty-five or thirty in each, assigning to each section the time in the week and place for meeting. In this way the gifts and graces of each member may be improved and used in the personal development of each and to the profit of others. In this way a Church may become mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy. Once a month let all the sections meet in a general service. In making such an arrangement, among other things to be considered, are, age, sex, experience, talent, spirituality, musical talent, infirmities, distance, etc. Each band should have its own leader, appointed weekly, monthly, or quarterly.

## THE END TO BE SOUGHT.

The *great* and *first* object to be sought in the prayer service, by those who are prepared to offer prevailing prayer, should be to lead sinners to Christ *at once*, as much so as that of any revival service, technically so called. The idea is, or should be, to accomplish results by *uniting* the forces, that cannot be reached by working *single-handed*. The prayer service should be more for sinners than for Christians, and that they may be benefited and saved. They should be invited and brought to the service.

## RESULTS MUST FOLLOW.

The moral and saving power of that Church must result in the conversion of sinners, whose members crowd the prayer room and ardently and in faith ask for and receive, themselves, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then unitedly offer prevailing prayer for sinners.

## AN EXAMPLE.

Dr. James Porter, D. D., relates the following respecting the earnest and united effort of a Christian father and mother to bring their children to repentance: "The solemn question, 'What am I doing for the conversion of my children?' came home to the father's heart. He talked to his wife about the matter, and they covenanted together to set apart a day for fasting and prayer that their children might be saved. On the morning of the day the father confessed to his children his past indifference, and told them what he and their mother had resolved on. They heard with an indifferent smile. The second and third days were spent in the same way.

**The** evening of the third day one of their sons came home, confessed his sins, and asked the prayers of his parents, and stated that he had had no peace since he learned of their purpose. Soon all the children were converted to God."

POWER OF UNITED PRAYER.

**The** following incident was related to Rev. M. W. Knapp, by a Christian lady: "I will relate an incident that happened in the neighborhood where I used to live, that proves the power of united prayer. During a revival service there was a prominent man of that place that persistently refused to yield to the entreaties of friends, and give himself to Christ. One evening after the service had closed, several of his neighbors who were very anxious to see him converted, agreed that precisely at one o'clock the next day each one would go to God in secret, and earnestly pray for his conversion. The next evening he came to the meeting, went forward, and asked the prayers of God's people. He said that as he was walking along the road that afternoon, between one and two o'clock, there came upon him, all at once, such an overwhelming sense of his sins that it seemed more than he could endure. It seemed impossible for him to proceed any further, so he turned off to one side of the road, and knelt down by a tree, and prayed to God to have mercy on him. He was happily converted to God that evening."

"One in their covenant, Head and King,  
They should be one in heart;  
**Of** one salvation all should sing,  
Each claiming his own part."

—*Joseph Irons.*

## LECTURE XXVIII.

### *PREVAILING PRAYER AND A REVIVAL; OR "REVIVAL FIRES ARE KINDLED BY THE BREATH OF PRAYER."*

While the title of my lecture is prevailing prayer and a revival, I shall take the liberty to broaden my remarks beyond my theme, by speaking of a revival, and then, of the agencies and means by which it may be promoted.

Prayer is as essential a link, in the chain of causes that lead to a revival, as truth itself. Truth *alone* hardens the sinner in impenitence. To become saving, it must be accompanied by faith, exercised and perfected by prayer.

#### DIVINE AND HUMAN IN SOUL SAVING.

I do not believe that a soul is ever saved independently of human agency. So far as we know, under the *economy of grace* human agency is just as necessary as Divine. God has irrevocably associated these two agencies together in saving men, and, "what, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder." "We are laborers *together* with God." "We then, as workers *together with Him* beseech you, etc."

#### BLESSED WORK !

No nobler, more blessed, or farther reaching work can be done on earth than to promote a revival of religion. To be the agent, under God, in leading to Christ, and a godly life, one soul, is a work worthy of the utmost efforts of a *lifetime*,



and the remembrance of such a work cannot but thrill the soul with ever increasing gratitude and rapture, as the ages of eternity shall roll by.

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENTS.

Habakkuk (3:2) most earnestly prays: "O, Lord, revive Thy work." David, likewise, prays (Psa. 118:25): "O, Lord, I beseech Thee send now prosperity!"

#### WHAT IS A REVIVAL?

It is such a quickening of believers, by the Spirit of God as results in the conviction and conversion of sinners.

#### CAN WE HAVE SUCH A REVIVAL?

Brethren, that is for *us* to say. We have this matter largely in our own hands. God is ready. We may have it if we *will*. An indomitable and aggressive purpose to have a revival is a very important condition of success.

#### WHEN MAY WE HAVE SUCH A REVIVAL?

That is for Christians to determine. On God's part, "*all* things are *now* ready." "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in My name, He *will* give it you." Christians too often excuse their want of earnestness and faith by a; "Perhaps God is testing our faith; or may be the *set* time to favor Zion has not yet come." The Holy Spirit is in the world, and *always*, in all of His infinite energy, is *waiting* to break forth upon the Church in endueing, and on sinners, in His convicting, power. But there are conditions, on our part, to be met, and as soon as they shall have been met the work will begin, more certainly than the harvest rewards the toil of the husbandman. A revival is not a miracle, but, on the human side

a natural result of the operation of certain principles that are within the reach of, and always operative by a consecrated and believing Church.

HOW EXTENSIVE A REVIVAL MAY WE HAVE ?

Just as extensive as we will believe and work for. "Be it unto thee even as *thou* wilt."

HOW CAN WE HAVE SUCH A REVIVAL ?

I answer, by doing our part of the work according to the instructions given in the Word of God. Spiritual results cannot be produced by unspiritual and immoral agencies and means. When men want to reach material or intellectual results, they put forth *rational* efforts. So, if we would reach spiritual results we must first study the principles underlying success, and then put them into practice. The way of the Lord must be prepared. Revivals follow rational preparation for their coming. But one in ten thousand realizes what preparation is often necessary. Mr. Moody would not consent to conduct a special service unless, at least, one month's most faithful preparation should be made in the way of sermons preached, prayer services conducted, and visitation from house to house. I have been under engagement for six weeks to assist in a special service, having given instruction, in detail, as to the preparatory work, and yet, when I arrived to go to work, the pastor had not even announced from the pulpit, or through the press, that there would be a special service.

THE AGENCIES EMPLOYED.

The first part of this preparation should be confined to the human agencies to be used in revival work. We should distinguish between

the *agencies* (the Holy Spirit and Christians) the *instrument* (God's *truth*) and the *means* (of which there is a multitude), used in securing a revival. The Divine agency is a "constant and invariable power working toward the salvation of men, not arbitrarily, but in co-ordination with Divinely appointed agents. The human agency is an inconstant and variable power, sometimes working to the same end, and sometimes inactive, working, too, in different degrees of efficiency in different persons. Whenever the human agency meets the Divine agency in co-operation, there always follows a revival."

The Holy Spirit is the prime and great agent. Christians are secondary agents, some of these having peculiar *offices* to fill, as Paul says (Eph. 4:11,12): "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ."

#### PREPARATION FOR A REVIVAL.

By preparation for a revival I do not mean certain human arrangements, but the bringing into existence certain experiences, and states in the hearts and lives of Christians, as impel toward and secure a revival. The revival should begin at *home*, with every Christian. On the *human* side the *pastor should be the revival center*. It should *begin* with him. He stands at the flood-gate of saving power. His hand of faith should lift the flood-gate and let the blessing on the people. The revival spirit should dominate, and impel him, and break out, in the grip of his hand,

the flash of his eye, the words, tones and spirit of his conversation, the earnestness, faith and power of his prayers, and the adaptation of his sermons (on *fire*) to the pressing, paramount needs of Christians and sinners.

Himself prepared, the pastor should arouse his Church to a profound and soul-stirring sense of their spiritual condition and need, and impel them to the most intense and earnest effort in *personal* preparation, and *personal* effort to save souls.

#### A SIEGE.

It is infinitely important that it be *well* understood by all that the effort is to be a *siege*, not to be lifted until the enemy surrenders, whatever may be in the way. An effort into which the pastor, and his helpers, do not put all there is of them, and all they can get from God—hope, courage, physical, mental and moral power, and dogged persistence, will result in a victory far less than is possible.

#### ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACT.

There must take full possession of the pastor and his helpers, a belief—a *faith*, “nothing wavering”—that, by the help of God, they can have what they *will*, in harmony with God’s will. Doubting *this* is doubting God. It paralyzes faith and activity, and makes a revival impossible. Remembering that “the battle is the Lord’s,” that “our sufficiency is of God,” that “faith is the victory that overcometh the world,” and, that faith in cyclonic *action* knows no defeat, victory may be had. The giants that possess the land may be great, but God is *greater* than the giants.

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Any pastor, and his people, who will pay the price, may have a revival.

WE MUST REALIZE THE NEED OF A REVIVAL.

In order to a proper preparation of the human agencies, there must first be a *realization* of the *need* of a revival. "O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity!" This is the prayer of one who had been surveying the situation—had been feeling the pulse of the Church. We need to do the same. In many instances the social meetings are neglected or abandoned. Many persons who were once Christians, do not even attend public worship; family altars are broken down; private prayer and a devout study of the Word have been given up. The ungodly are bold and aggressive in their wickedness. But these are not the *disease* but only the *symptoms* of it. The disease is deeply seated in the *heart*. God only can reach it by the agency of the Holy Ghost, by powerfully reviving backslidden Christians. This preparation must be *personal*. With the Psalmist we should say: "Create in *me* a clean heart, O God, and *renew a right* spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners *shall* be converted unto Thee."

CHRISTIANS MUST HUMBLE THEMSELVES.

I do not know of anything that will restore confidence in the hearts of sinners, in our Christian profession, and give us such a leverage on them, for good, as this humbling ourselves before them. Said a brother to me: "Brother Wigle, I feel that I ought to go to my neighbors and

ask their forgiveness for my neglect of their soul interests." He did so, and blessed were the results. Especially ought this to be done, if there has been a difficulty between you and your neighbors—a difficulty *known* to the public. This trying to fix things up without thorough and honest confession and reformation to the *bottom*, is healing the wound but *skin-deep*, while the deadly virus of unkind feeling and sin, unrepented of, lies deeply buried beneath. If we would *reform* to the bottom we must confess to the bottom ourselves. When pastor, on a certain charge, the two foremost members of the Church, were persons who, for several years, had been bitter antagonists. Several attempts had been made to reconcile them, but proved abortive. We began a special service. It ran about two weeks, when there came a dead-lock. What was the matter? There could be, and there was, no question as to the difficulty in the way. I went to them and talked with them, and told them that they were in the way, and that unless they removed the obstruction the service would close. In the opening season of prayer in the evening service, I was impressed that I should call those two brothers by name, and ask them to step forward to where I stood at the altar rail, take each other by the hand, make their confessions to God, to one another and to the people. The conviction that I should do this, at first, was not sufficiently strong and clear to warrant me in taking such a step, and as I somehow felt that I was not to preach that night, I said, after the first season of prayer and singing,

"We will have another season of prayer." During this time the conviction evidenced that it was from God, and I said: "Lord, I'll do it." Having risen from our knees, I called the two brothers by name, and asked them to come out of their pews and come forward before the congregation (a church full), and make this matter right. One, a quick, nervous man, was on his feet at once, and looked across the church to see if his brother had responded to the call. The other sat till a second call had been given him, when he slowly arose, and, standing for a few moments, full of emotion, the tears chasing each other down his face, he began talking, then walked out of the pew and met his brother at the altar rail. They took each other by the hand, broke down before God and the people. The obstacle was out of the way! I did not have to preach. I did not have to exhort sinners to come to Christ. All I had to do was just to give them the privilege, and, without any hesitation, they came forward, broken in heart, and contrite in spirit, and the work went on until one of the greatest, if not the greatest, revival followed that had ever been known in that place.

#### CHRISTIANS MUST DENY THEMSELVES.

They must lay aside all personal preferences and enjoyments, for the time, and give themselves, so far as possible, solely to the work of *soul* saving. Everything, in the way of socials, entertainments, lectures, concerts, financial plans, parties, and even regular services that do not directly aim at the salvation of souls, must, for

the time being, be laid aside. How utterly selfish Christians—*Christians?* I beg pardon; I mean Church members are, sometimes. While assisting in a service, in a certain town in Michigan, during a meeting of four weeks continuance, with two services a day, except Saturday, a father and mother with five or six comparatively small children, missed but one or two of the services, rain or shine, usually bringing the children with them. Others, converted in a service just closed, nine miles distant, drove over and back, a distance of eighteen miles, while members of the Church within twenty and fifty rods of the church, seldom attended.

#### UNKIND CRITICISM.

Christians must keep out of their hearts the spirit of unkind criticism. It is easy to find fault. It does not require a *particle* of grace to do it. *Backslidden* Church members, wicked men, and devils are full of the spirit of fault-finding. How often a word of adverse criticism, not only paralyzes the influence for good, of the one who utters it, but throws up a barrier of separation between the one, of whom the word is spoken, and some unsaved soul, who, but for the spoken word, would have been saved through the influence of the one against whom it is spoken. Parents, too often, thus speak of the pastor, or some one else, in the hearing of their children.

#### A TEACHABLE SPIRIT.

If Christians assume to know more about conducting a special service than the pastor, or helper, distraction and defeat will result. Christians are an army. The conductor of the meet-



ing is a general. He is supposed to know better how to conduct a campaign than private soldiers. At least he should have a fair chance. Those under his command should be prompt in action—in singing, praying, in testimony and any other work. Alexander conquered the world “by not delaying.” Like a huge beast of prey he unexpectedly bounded from kingdom to kingdom, craunching between his relentless jaws, the bones of dismembered empires. Take the enemy by surprise, and by storm.

#### THE BIBLE AND A REVIVAL.

The Bible must be kept to the *front*. A revival in which this is not done, can be neither thorough nor genuine. One of the greatest needs of to-day is a great revival of *Bible* study, on our *knees*! The great instrument God uses in saving men is the *truth*. Paul states this fact in first Corinthians (1:21): “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (the truth) to save them that believe.” If the plain unvarnished truth, presented by teachers “full of faith and power,” will not bring men to Christ, we may despair of their salvation. All the energies of grace are communicated to the soul through the channel of the Word. “The entrance of Thy words giveth light.” On the day of Pentecost Peter proclaimed the truths of the Gospel, and thousands were convicted of sin, and cried out: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Not only are men *convicted* through the truth, but “the law of the Lord is perfect, *converting* the soul.” “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *Word of God*,”

and, having been converted, "men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Young Christians, "as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may *grow thereby*." Sanctifying grace comes to the heart "through a belief of the *truth*." The Lord Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth;" and as the apostle says: "purifying their hearts by faith"—by faith in the truth as the *instrument*.

#### PREACHING AND PRAYER.

Yes, "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe;" but it is preaching "in demonstration of the *Spirit and of power*" that persuades men to "believe;" and that power is given in answer to prayer. We can have the clatter of the telegraph apparatus without the *lightening* in it; so we may have preaching that is a mere clatter of words without any of God's thunderbolts in it. Direct, forceful, all-sided preaching—"law and gospel, love and wrath, mercy and judgment, eternal life and eternal death," is needed. If but one class of truths is presented, but one chance to succeed in many is had. All preaching should be aimed at the conviction of the conscience, capture of the judgment and surrender of the will. This kind of preaching will be practical and eloquent.

The truth should come through a heart tremulous with the emotions of love and tenderness. Said Lyman Beecher: "The mightiest created power in the universe is a heart on fire with the love of God." Said Dr. J. O. Peck: "No man

is fit to preach on hell till he is in such a melting mood as to have his tears hiss on the burning gates." The impression *must* be made that the preacher is profoundly and passionately in love with the sin blinded and perishing sinner. This does not mean that nothing but the love-side of the truth shall be presented. A faithful portrayal before the eyes of the sinner, of the hellishness of sin, the exceeding deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart, the blasting, blighting and damning effect of sin on a human soul, and the eternal doom that awaits the finally impenitent in the world to come, may be the expression of unutterable love for that soul. As the needs in the case require, the preacher should hurl the awful, red-hot, hissing thunderbolts of God's threatened anger and judgments; again, his whole being should flow down in tenderness and tears.

WE MUST BELIEVE IN REVIVALS, BEFORE WE CAN  
BELIEVE FOR THEM.

How is it possible for one, who believes and reads the Bible, not to believe in revivals? There were great revivals in the days of Moses, Joshua and David. Think of the great revival in Ezra's time, when fifty thousand people listened to God's Word from morning until midnight. All Churches believe in, and conduct revival services.

PRAYER AND A REVIVAL.

Inasmuch, as almost all that I have said on this subject of prayer, directly, or indirectly, may be applied to revival efforts, I shall not dwell at

length on prayer, at this time, as a means to that end.

I have already taught that prevailing prayer is the *great* work, on the human side, by which a revival may be realized. It is not great preaching that we want, so much as great praying. Yet, the more thorough the preparation for the pulpit, other things being equal, the more certainly will God revive His work. When once the Church is set on fire of God there will be no trouble about the unsaved. The fire will soon kindle in the hearts of sinners and break out in a "repentance that needeth not to be repented of."

ALL NIGHT IN PRAYER.

"A precious revival had burst, as it were, upon one of our Churches, to the surprise of most of the members of it. They were not expecting it, or prepared for it. If they had been praying for it in a cold, formal way, they hardly expected their prayers to be answered. But now the Lord was manifestly among them, reviving His people and converting the impenitent. How should they account for it? True, He has graciously said: "Ask, and it shall be given you;" but they had not been asking in a way that authorized them to expect such a blessing. But some one has been praying, if no more, was the reply. And so it was. It was ascertained that one humble woman had spent a whole night in prayer for the very revival that God was then giving them. How precious the reward! And have we none among us at this day to feel enough for the impenitent, enough for the glory of God, to spend all night in prayer? One

night? We have preaching, and that which is good, and perhaps enough in general of it; but what the Church now seems to need especially is praying on the part of the members. May they become so burdened with the worth of souls perishing in sin that they cannot rest by night or by day, but as they cast their burdens upon the Lord, then the windows of heaven will be opened, and blessings abundant will be showered down upon us."—*Presbyterian Journal*.

Rev. N. Murray, D. D., relates that: "Late on a cold November night I was retiring to rest. There was a knock at my door. A simple, praying, warm-hearted man was introduced. After a brief silence he thus addressed me: 'My dear pastor, I have come to tell you that God is about to revive His work among us.' I asked him why he so felt. 'I went into the stable,' said he, 'to care for my cattle two hours ago, and there the Lord has kept me until now, and I *feel* that we are going to have a revival.' There could be no doubt as to his sincerity, and that was the commencement of the first revival under my ministry.

"A few years after an aged man renowned for piety, came to my study. Though poor in this world, he was rich in faith. In prayer he seemed to converse with God. Said he: 'I have called to say, my dear pastor, that the Lord is in the midst of us, and we shall soon see the effect of His presence.' I asked the venerable man why he felt so. His reply was as follows: 'Since twelve o'clock last night the Spirit of God has been so upon me that I have not been able to do anything but pray and rejoice in the pros-

pect of a blessed refreshing from the presence of the Lord.' And *that* was the commencement of the first revival in my present field of labor."

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE.

In 1857, a city missionary in New York, bending lowly before God in prayer for the perishing souls about him, pleadingly cried: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? He daily reiterated the cry. His earnestness became *intense*. His faith took hold of the promises, and he rose to the expectation that hundreds and thousands would be converted to God. He had no idea *how* this would be brought about. He resolved on a noon-day prayer meeting. On the twenty-third of September he was found in a room connected with the Fulton Street Chapel. He waited half an hour, when one person entered; shortly after another came in; then three or four others. With these six persons the meeting proceeded and ended. One week after, in the same place, another meeting was held, at which twenty-four were present. The Holy Ghost was present too. It was resolved that a meeting be held the next day, at which a large number were present. This was the beginning of the Fulton Street daily Noon-day Prayer Meeting. The room soon became too small, and they moved into the middle lecture room. God moved upon the people, and soon the cry of the penitent was heard. The fire spread. Men felt impelled to pray, as by an irresistible impulse. Christians, without respect to denominational distinctions, rushed into, and filled all places opened for prayer. The *union* of Christians, engaged so intensely in

intercessory prayer struck the world with *amazement*. It was felt that this was prayer indeed. A love for souls sprang up. Sinners felt that it was awful to trifle in the place of prayer. It was felt that Christians obtained positive and direct answers to their prayers, and when they *united* to pray for any *particular* person that person was *sure* to be converted. The spirit of prayer increased, and in the fifth month, from the beginning, prayer meetings were held in churches, theatres, court rooms, public halls, workshops and tents; where crowds attended and filled the places. The interest rapidly spread to other cities—Boston, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, etc.—until the whole land received the rain. The most hopeless and forbidding, were brought under its almighty power and saved. It is said that the times of Wesley and Whitefield were characterized by powerful preaching; but *this* was a time of earnest and powerful *prayer*! Yes, but the times of Wesley and Whitefield were times of powerful *preaching*, because of the powerful *praying behind* the preaching!

EASIER IN SOME CASES THAN IN OTHERS.

No question but that it is much easier to secure a revival in some communities than in others, at a *given* time, though a revival may be had in any community at *any* given time. Certain circumstances and conditions being present, make it easy to reach results, *viz.*: If there has not been a revival for some time, if Christians are fully consecrated to God, full of faith and power, and *united* in their effort. The following will illustrate, related to me by the Rev. Timo-

thy Edwards of Norway, Michigan. In the year 1864, in the township of Orange, there being no organized body of Christians, three souls, a man and two women, began a little prayer meeting in the school-house on Thursday evening after the close of the school. The fact that there was such a meeting became known to the community, and a Mr. Ritenberg, whose wife was one of the three praying souls, thinking to have a little sport, went to the school-house, but instead of entering, stood outside, unbeknown to the worshipers, to listen. To his surprise, the man inside earnestly prayed for Mr. R. by name. Then the wife of the praying man led in prayer, and she too prayed for Mr. R. by name. Then the wife of Mr. R. engaged the ear, and love, and power of Him who had said: "Ask and ye shall receive." With choked voice and streaming eyes she earnestly besought God to save her husband. His heart was smitten, and he who came to make sport, went away to pray for *himself* too, and the next Thursday evening there were *four* praying souls in the place of worship. The work went on till there were about one hundred converted, and, at one time, seventy-two were organized into a society. This work was carried forward without the assistance of a minister of the Gospel, except that Mr. Edwards, then a young man clerking in a store in Ionia, went out and preached to the people on Sunday afternoon. The foregoing statement confirms two facts. (1.) That where there has been no revival for many years—hence, a great spiritual dearth—it is easy to secure a revival. (2.) That



*prayer* is the *great* and most important means to be used in securing a revival.

NOT "SOMETIME" BUT "NOW."

O Lord, I beseech Thee, send *now* prosperity!" As long as Christians say, "*Sometime* we will have a revival, and souls saved," so long the unsaved will say, "*Sometime* we expect to become Christians." As Christians narrow the time down to the *present* moment, so sinners will narrow the time of their surrender to God, down to the *present* moment; and when Christians have complete faith the ungodly, in their hearts, surrender—give up.

THE BURDEN TRANSMUTED AND TRANSFERRED.

When in prevailing, intercessory prayer, the burden of soul on Christians, for sinners, is rolled off, by faith, on God, then God transmutes the burden of soul, of believers, into a burden of conviction, and rolls it on the consciences of sinners. Soul burden is spiritual birth labor, and until this labor is passed, by an act of mighty faith, souls will not be born again, and the *quicker it is done the better*, before the strength of Christians is exhausted, by protracted labor.

WORK OF PRAYER AND OTHER CHRISTIAN WORK.

As I have delivered a whole lecture on prayer and personal effort, and briefly, in others, spoken of praying and working, I will need to say but little on these subjects, in this lecture.

The closest relation subsists between the work of *prayer* and *other* Christian work—*effectual* prayer and *effectual* work! Great faith in God and slothfulness in God's harvest-field are never coupled together in the same life.

## PRACTICAL.

What opportunities have you had for speaking to your unsaved friends? Have you improved them? Have you done this kind of work so faithfully, that, so far as your own personal effort is concerned, no sinner can say: "No man cared for my soul?"

Do you want a revival? Do you want a *great* revival? *Do you want a revival more than you want anything else?* We profess to be *Christians*—*Christ-like*. "Christ liveth in me"—seated on the throne of the inner kingdom of my being, and so dominates and controls every thought, word, motive, emotion and volition that I love sinners, in my measure, as Christ loved them, and am ready to work and die for them, if need be, as Christ loved and died for them. What a wealth, of everything good, is symbolized by that word, *Christian!* Who is worthy to bear it? Who dare to lift his hand!

I repeat: "Do you want a revival more than you want *anything* else?" More than you would want to save imperiled human life—the life of your dearest friend? Do you want a revival so much that, as far as possible, you will make everything else *bend* to it? "Red-hot coals will kindle a fire wherever they fall!" Will you pray for a revival? Will you pray for it without ceasing? Will you pray for it until God answers you? Will you pray for it until it is realized to the utmost possible degree?

WHERE HAST THOU GLEANED TO-DAY?

"Burdened gleaners, thy sheaves I see;  
Indeed, thou must a-weary be!

Singing along the homeward way,

Glad one, where hast thou gleaned to-day?"



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